



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
SINGAPORE

14 February 2020

Dear colleagues

It has been two months since we first knew about the mysterious pneumonia cases that were surfacing in Wuhan, China in December last year. The situation escalated quickly, not only in China, but also globally. By now, many countries have reported cases of COVID-19 infection. Singapore is no exception.

Our healthcare system has been preparing to deal with new emerging infectious diseases. We went through SARS 17 years ago, and we are much better prepared to deal with COVID-19 now. We have been building capacity and capability in addressing infectious diseases. We have strengthened our epidemiological surveillance and containment capabilities, set up the National Centre for Infectious Diseases, and our agencies hold regular emergency preparedness exercises to keep themselves operationally ready.

But no amount of preparation is good enough without a professional and committed healthcare team. That includes every one of you.

Even before Singapore confirmed our first imported case on 23 January, the healthcare team – both public and private sectors, including GPs – had already put in place precautionary measures in response to the global situation. These measures were enhanced as the situation evolved.

I know many of you have sacrificed your festive holidays, missed your reunion dinners and Valentine's Day celebrations, and even cancelled overseas holidays to step forward and ensure that our system is ready to face the challenges ahead.

On behalf of the Ministry of Health, I thank you for soldiering on despite the long hours and personal sacrifices you undoubtedly have to make. I am sure many Singaporeans appreciate your contributions in caring for our patients during this challenging period.

I am heartened to know that despite the challenges, you have shown an unwavering commitment to be part of the frontline team to fight against COVID-19.

Thank you for your dedication, courage and resilience. I am honoured to be a part of the Singapore healthcare team. The Ministry of Health will spare no effort in supporting you and ensuring that you have the resources to do your work well.

The road ahead is likely to be a long one. Take care of yourself, and look out for one another too. Let us work together and keep our loved ones safe.

Happy Valentine's Day too.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gan Kim Yong', with a long, sweeping line extending upwards and to the right.

Gan Kim Yong
Minister for Health