



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
SINGAPORE

28 December 2020

Dear Colleagues

As we embark on our journey of Phase Three today and the year draws to a close, it is timely to reflect on what we have gone through together in this extraordinary year – one that will be etched in our collective memory long after the pandemic is over.

Singapore saw our first imported COVID-19 case on 23 January, and we have come a long way since.

For the healthcare family, 2020 has no doubt been a gruelling year, filled at times with despair and hopelessness. But the year is also defined by a strong sense of mission, purpose and camaraderie as the healthcare fraternity came together to keep Singapore safe.

From the initial days of anxiety and uncertainty, we quickly improvised and adapted our structures and processes to find novel ways of caring for every patient, COVID-19 or otherwise.

We deployed medical teams to community care facilities and dormitories, augmented our healthcare workforce with the SG Healthcare Corps, and worked closely with partners across the public and private sectors to screen, test and care for patients.

At the peak, Singapore saw a staggering record of more than 1,400 new cases a day in April. But giving up was never an option. As a nation, we pressed on, and through a colossal effort, with every Singaporean playing their part, we eventually managed to bring our local transmissions down to its low levels today, with zero cases on some days.

As healthcare workers, you play a pivotal role in our nation's fight against COVID-19. I want to thank you for taking Singapore this far in our journey. That Singapore's COVID-19 fatality rate is amongst the lowest in the world is by no means a stroke of luck. It is a testament of your hard work, perseverance and sacrifice.

We have an excellent healthcare system and an outstanding healthcare workforce who never wavered in your commitment to keep every patient safe. Many of you went beyond the call of duty to care for your patients and bring them comfort during the darkest hour of their illness.

While global developments in vaccine development have given us hope that there could be light at the end of a long tunnel, vaccination is not a silver bullet that can bring a quick end to the pandemic. It will be some time before the storm will pass.

Yet, I am quietly confident that whatever comes our way next, we will be able to take it in our stride, and once again find strength to confront adversity together. The pandemic has tested our mettle, but it will not break our resolve and spirit.

The year-end festivities may be different this year, but I hope you have the opportunity to recharge, and spend time with your family and loved ones. Happy new year to all! Do stay safe, and stay well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gan Kim Yong', with a long, thin stroke extending upwards and to the right from the end of the signature.

Gan Kim Yong
Minister for Health