

FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Ministry of Health's "Communicable Disease Surveillance in Singapore 2007" Annual Report.

2007 was a significant year – it marked the year that the new International Health Regulations came into force. The challenge to international public health security from emerging infectious diseases requires good international cooperation as such diseases are not restricted by geographical boundaries. The international community needs to be constantly vigilant and be well prepared to face such threats. Singapore remains committed to the full implementation of our obligations under the International Health Regulations.

Globally, the risk of an influenza pandemic from influenza A (H5N1) remains a major concern. Despite substantial progress in global efforts to bring avian influenza under control, the disease continued to spread to new countries and to new areas in countries where containment has not been successful. The importance of an effective surveillance system cannot be over-emphasised. Although Singapore does not have avian influenza outbreaks, the threat from imported human cases is very real. The medical community in Singapore needs to be vigilant to ensure that any human cases are detected early so that appropriate containment measures can be rapidly put in place.

We encountered sporadic large food-borne outbreaks in 2007. This included the outbreak of norovirus gastroenteritis in a primary school and the *Salmonella* enteritidis outbreak that was traced back to a confectionary factory. With the close co-operation from our key partners (Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority & National Environment Agency), these outbreaks were quickly put under control.

This report was published from the compilation of epidemiological information on communicable diseases collated through our partnership with the community of health professionals. It bears strong testimony to the long-term commitment and working relationship we have established with our medical colleagues working at the frontline in combating and minimising the threats of communicable diseases.

I hope that you will find this report useful and constructive in your field of work. I look forward to your continued support and cooperation in the national surveillance of communicable diseases.



PROFESSOR K SATKU
DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL SERVICES
MINISTRY OF HEALTH, SINGAPORE