

LETTER FROM HEALTH MINISTER



1 June 2020

Dear colleagues

From tomorrow, Singapore will exit the Circuit Breaker and transit to a phased approach to resume activities safely.

Since my last letter to you in February, I know many of you have been working tirelessly at the frontline of Singapore's fight against COVID-19. The journey is long, and we are far from the end of the pandemic. Therefore it remains our priority to ensure sufficient healthcare capacity and a sustainable healthcare workforce.

We have prepared for the rise in COVID-19 cases, and have rapidly expanded our healthcare capacity. We created and ramped up different types of healthcare facilities to support the needs of COVID-19 patients at each step of their recovery journey. These community care facilities also allow our hospitals to focus their resources on patients who require emergency and critical care.

Through the SG Healthcare Corps, we have augmented the healthcare workforce by tapping on retired and non-practising staff, as well as members of the public with passion to serve.

But the surge in patient load still means that many of you are putting in longer shifts or taking on additional roles. Some had to step out of your comfort zone, as you are deployed beyond the healthcare setting to care facilities, off-site medical posts or migrant worker dormitories.

Yet I hear heart-warming accounts of how you have taken all these in your stride, rose to the challenge and surmounted difficulties. Some of you have shared that fighting at the frontline of the COVID-19 battle serves as a poignant reminder of why you pledged to join this noble profession in the first place.

I thank you for your unwavering commitment, dedication and resilience, and the personal sacrifices you have quietly made. I also want to convey my appreciation to your family and loved ones, whose encouragement and understanding have undoubtedly lent you strength to soldier on.

Our healthcare workers are our most precious resource in the fight against COVID-19. The Ministry of Health is committed to take good care of you. We will spare no effort to make sure you are safe at work and are equipped to do your job well. For those who have fallen ill, whether in the line of duty or otherwise, the healthcare fraternity will take good care of you, and I wish you a speedy recovery.

Our healthcare institutions have put in place measures to make sure that all of you have adequate rest between shifts. But beyond physical wellbeing, we recognise that the pandemic can take a toll on your mental and emotional wellbeing. Tap on the counselling services, helplines and support programmes that are available to you. More importantly, keep a lookout for one another and lend a helping hand, and a listening ear, when your peers need you.

The journey may seem long and relentless. But take heart that Singaporeans are behind you, and will continue to fight COVID-19 with us. Take good care of yourselves, and of one another. Stay safe, and stay well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gan Kim Yong".

Gan Kim Yong
Minister for Health