

3 SMA Press Release
4 Past Epidemics
5 Reflections on SARS
6 Diary of a TSH Doctor
8 College Advisory
10 A Psychiatrist's Take on SARS

VOLUME 35 NO.3 MARCH 2003

MITA (P) 288/02/2003

SMA NEWS

SARS OUTBREAK

Editorial Note:

In this issue, we cover the SARS outbreak which made its way into Singapore in late February, through 3 young women who were in Hong Kong from 20-24 February 2003. In view of the daily updates on the unfolding situation, all information and articles in this issue are accurate and current at the time of print.

SMA ACTS

SARS – MASKS FOR GPs/FAMILY PHYSICIANS

In response to members' feedback on the difficulties in obtaining the N95 masks, SMA purchased 5,000 pieces of 3M N95-1860 masks from the Singapore General Hospital on 28 March 2003. These masks were on sale at the SMA Secretariat on 29 March 2003 from 9am. In view of the limited stock available at that time, the SMA Council decided to give priority to GP clinics, and to allocate 1 box (20 masks) per clinic. The intention was to help GP clinics tide over the interim period until new supplies arrived. Due to the overwhelming response, all 5,000 pieces were sold out by 1.30pm on the same day.

We wish to put on record our deepest appreciation to the Management of Singapore General Hospital, for so kindly making available the 5,000 pieces of N95-1860 masks to us for sale to GP clinics.

Doctors who did not get the masks were requested to indicate their requirements. They were informed to collect their box of masks when stock arrived on 2 April.

Meanwhile, doctors/ clinics have since been contacting SMA to place their orders as they have not been able to obtain the masks elsewhere. At the meeting with GPs/ family physicians on 30 March, the MOH had agreed to look into the matter. 5,040 pieces of the 3M N95-1860 masks were received from MOH on 2 April. This second shipment was then sold to GP clinics who were unable to obtain masks on 29 March, after they had placed orders. We look forward to receiving further shipments from the Ministry.

We will keep members informed as and when we have new stock again. We look forward to a resolution of stock shortages so that GPs/family physicians will be able to serve the community effectively and safely, and help to contain the SARS outbreak.

For updates on SARS, please visit our website at <http://www.sma.org.sg/position/SARS.html>



EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor

Dr Wong Tien Yin

Deputy Editor

Dr Daniel Fung

Members

Dr Chan Kah Poon

Prof Chee Yam Cheng

Dr John Chiam

Dr Jon Goh

Dr Lee Pheng Soon

Dr Terence Lim

Dr Oh Jen Jen

Dr Toh Han Chong

Ex-Officio

Prof Low Cheng Hock

Dr Tham Tat Yeap

Executive Secretary

Ms Chua Gek Eng

Editorial Manager

Ms Krysanita Tan

POSTPONEMENT OF SMA EVENTS

(1) SMA 34TH NATIONAL MEDICAL CONVENTION, "HOME HEALTHCARE", 12-13 APRIL 2003

(2) SMA ANNUAL DINNER, 12 APRIL 2003

In view of the current SARS outbreak, we wish to inform you that the abovementioned events will be postponed to a later date to be advised.

We are fully aware of the logistical inconveniences that such a postponement may cause. However, in view of the general advice to minimise non-urgent congregations of large numbers of people, the SMA Council has decided to postpone the SMA National Medical Convention and SMA Annual Dinner. We sincerely hope that you will continue to support us.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused and seek your kind understanding and cooperation in this national crisis.

DR THAM TAT YEAN

Honorary Secretary

43rd SMA Council

DR TAN KOK LEONG

Chairman

Convention Organising Committee

DR IVOR THEVATHASAN

Chairman

Dinner Organising Committee

The views and opinions expressed in all the articles are those of the authors. These are not the views of the Editorial Board nor the SMA Council unless specifically stated so in writing. The contents of the Newsletter are not to be printed in whole or in part without prior written approval of the Editor.

Published by the Singapore Medical Association, Level 2, Alumni Medical Centre, 2 College Road, Singapore 169850. Tel: 6223-1264 Fax: 6224-7827 Email: news@sma.org.sg URL: <http://www.sma.org.sg>