

DH holds reservation to SARS report

October 16, 2003

In response to the Report of the Hospital Authority (HA) Review Panel on the SARS outbreak, a spokesman for the Department of Health (DH) today (October 16) made the following statement:

The Department of Health noted that the Report of the Hospital Authority Review Panel on the SARS outbreak is primarily an HA's internal investigation report to review HA's management, organization structure and response in dealing with the SARS outbreak.

DH said that the Panel had limited contact with the Department. On August 2, the Panel raised specific questions with DH for the express purpose of reviewing and assessing HA's actions in a proper context. In reply to DH's comprehensive response on August 18, the Panel asked further questions on August 20 and DH sent a reply on August 28. The two DH letters have been uploaded to http://www.info.gov.hk/info/sars/e_news.htm.

DH noted that some of the facts quoted in the Panel's Report are different from those provided by DH in its two letters. Moreover, the Panel did not interview DH officials nor give DH an opportunity to make representations on the Panel's observations and comments in relation to the Department as a matter of procedural fairness. DH, therefore, has grave reservations on the comments and observations made by the Panel and the conclusions drawn therefrom.

In respect of the recommendations made by the Panel on the prevention and control of infectious diseases, DH will respond actively and positively. In fact, a number of those recommendations are being implemented by the department.