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7 February 2005

The Honourable TUNG Chee-hwa
The Chief Executive of the
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
of the People's Republic of China
Chief Executive's Office
Hong Kong

Dear Mr TUNG,

**Notification system on infectious diseases
between the Mainland and Hong Kong**

Press coverage of the meningococcal infection (MI) in the Mainland in recent months has aroused much public concern in Hong Kong. At the meeting of the Panel on Health Services (the Panel) on 3 February 2005, members were briefed by the Administration on the recent situation of MI in the Mainland and the Department of Health (DH)'s response. The Panel was informed that the Ministry of Health in Beijing only provided information regarding the recent situation of MI in the Mainland to the Centre for Health Protection of DH on 31 January 2005 when such information was sought by the Centre on that day.

The Panel is concerned about the effectiveness of the communications between the Mainland and Hong Kong on infectious diseases. The Panel considers that an electronic platform should be put in place to facilitate all health authorities at the provincial level or equivalent in the Mainland, as well as DH, to disseminate, obtain and exchange statistics of infectious diseases and outbreak information.

The Panel notes that an electronic platform on infectious diseases is being developed by the Mainland. On behalf of the Panel, I am writing to request you to convey to Vice Premier cum Minister of Health, Madam WU Yi, on the need to put in place such a platform as soon as practicable and to include Hong Kong as one of the users of the platform.

I look forward to your early reply to the Panel's request.

Yours sincerely,

(Andrew CHENG Kar-foo)
Chairman
Legislative Council Panel on Health Services



24 March 2005

The Honourable Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Chairman
Legislative Council Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Mr Cheng,

**Notification system on infectious diseases
between the Mainland and Hong Kong**

Thank you for your letter dated 7 February 2005.

The Centre for Health Protection (the Centre) has been monitoring infectious diseases in neighboring economies closely. Of particular importance and relevance of the Centre's monitoring efforts is that it has established a direct and flexible communications channel with the Mainland Ministry of Health (the Ministry) to facilitate a timely exchange of information on sudden and unusual upsurge of infectious diseases.

Cases of meningococcal infection occur regularly in many places including the Mainland. In view of the public concern about the recent meningococcal infection situation in Anhui province and the Mainland, the Centre requested the Ministry for relevant information in January and received a prompt reply on the same day. Given the Ministry's readiness to share such information, we consider that the system works well. That said, we are always open to suggestions of improving the system further.

中華人民共和國香港特別行政區行政長官辦公室

Office of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China

香港中環下亞厘畢道中區政府合署中座五樓 電話：(852) 2878 3300 傳真：(852) 2509 0577
5/F Main Wing, Central Government Offices, Lower Albert Road, Hong Kong Telephone: (852) 2878 3300 Fax: (852) 2509 0577

In addition, senior health officials of the Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao meet on a regular basis to enhance collaboration in respect of the prevention and control of infectious diseases. The Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food and the Director of Health, will explore with their counterparts in the Ministry on the feasibility of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region developing a common electronic platform with the Mainland for reporting infectious diseases, as well as any other means of facilitating the exchange of relevant information.

Yours sincerely,



(Robin Ip)

Private Secretary to Chief Executive

b.c.c. AA/CS
AA/SHWF