

China gets new social security cards

Distribution of third-generation social security cards began in China on Friday, with the new cards supporting direct settlement of trans-provincial medical expenses.

The new cards have more functions, are more secure and better support direct settlement of medical expenses, said Huang Huabo, deputy director of Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security social security center in Wuhan, capital of central China's Hubei province.

The cards will replace the old cards as a national reimbursement network for inpatient services is built. The network will allow any patient enrolled in the public medical insurance system to be reimbursed for inpatient expenses, no matter where they are treated, said the ministry.

The first group of ten cards were handed out at Zhongnan Hospital, Wuhan University.

Before the network was set up, inpatients had to return to the locality where they were enrolled to be reimbursed. Currently, 1.34 billion Chinese people are enrolled in various public medical insurance systems, 98.8 percent of the population.

In 2016, the government spent 1.3 trillion yuan on medical and health care, a 10-percent increase from 2015.