

Beijing to launch medical reform



A pharmacy [File photo: Chinanews.com]

Beijing is to officially launch medical reforms on Saturday, separating hospital services from drug sales.

The overall price of drugs is expected to fall as the reform requires all public medical institutions in Beijing to do away with the 15 percent markup on drug prices.

All the cost of 435 medical services can be reimbursed from the medical insurance, except those otherwise provided by the state.

The reform also requires hospitals to bring in medical affairs fees to replace registration, diagnosis and treatment fees.

The director of Beijing Municipal Commission of Health and Family Planning, Fang Laiying, outlined the new mechanism.

“The medical affairs fee is a kind of compensation for the cost of medical activities at a hospital. The medical affairs service fees vary. For example, the starting fee is 20 yuan for a community hospital, with a patient paying 1 yuan and medical insurance paying the rest. For Class III hospitals, the starting fee is 50 yuan, with a patient to pay 10 yuan and their medical insurance to pay the rest,” said Fang.

Fang added that the move aims to give Class III hospitals more strength to treat difficult and complicated cases.

The reforms will be implemented among more than 3,600 hospitals.

It is part of the country’s efforts to end the practice of hospitals supplementing their income through drug sales, while guaranteeing that

medical personnel get recognition for the value of their skills and services.

Tibet reports first H7N9 case

A human infection of H7N9 bird flu has been reported in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, the local health authority said Saturday.

The patient, a 41-year-old migrant worker from neighboring Sichuan Province, was diagnosed on April 3 and is in quarantine at Tibet's Third People's Hospital in Lhasa, the regional health and family planning commission said on its website.

The man had been involved in the trade of live poultry since arriving in Lhasa in February.

His symptoms were reported to the regional disease prevention and control center on April 2, and his condition was confirmed on April 3. He is the first human infection of H7N9 bird flu in Tibet.

Following the diagnosis, live poultry trading has been suspended across the region. All those who had been in close contact with the patient are under medical observation.

H7N9 is a bird flu strain first reported to have infected humans in China in March 2013. Infections are most likely to strike in winter and spring.

Five seized in cross-border heroin trafficking

Police in southwest China's Yunnan Province have arrested five suspects and seized 41 kg of heroin in the latest crackdown on drug trafficking.

The men and drug were seized in Ruili City in Dai-Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture of Dehong on March 31, the public security bureau of Longling County said in a statement Saturday.

The bureau received reports in February that an overseas drug trafficking ring were planning to ship narcotics to China.

Police detected the two suspects from Myanmar as soon as they crossed the border into China at 4 p.m. on March 31. They then followed them to a hotel

in Ruili City, where the suspects met their three Chinese collaborators. All five were arrested.

From the trunk of their SUV, police found 120 blocks of heroin, which weighed 41.785 kg.

The two suspects from Myanmar said they had been promised 5,000 yuan (725 U.S. dollars).

The investigation continues.

Dehong prefecture is close to the opium-growing Golden Triangle. Last year, border police in Dehong seized 1.6 tonnes of narcotics, completed investigations into 668 drug-related crimes and arrested 662 suspects.

[More seeking help for mental illnesses](#)

The number of registered patients with serious mental disorders in China reached 5.4 million last year, with three-quarters of them suffering schizophrenia, China's top health authority said on Friday.

Of the patients, 88.7 percent are under the management of health authorities, and receive public services such as medical care and living subsidies, Wang Bin, deputy chief for disease control and prevention at the National Health and Family Planning Commission, said at a news conference on Friday, which coincided with World Health Day.

Previous figures released by the commission showed the number of such registered patients was 4.3 million by the end of 2014, with 73.2 percent managed by health authorities.

China has been improving mental health services, with the number of institutions that offer such services reaching nearly 3,000 by the end of 2015, compared with 1,650 in 2010, Wang said.

Last year, the number of certified psychiatrists in China exceeded 27,700, and the number of psychotherapists in China exceeded 5,000, she added.

Patients with serious mental disorders have been receiving improved services throughout China with multi-departmental cooperation such as regular follow-up diagnosis and treatment.

In places such as Beijing and Shanghai they also enjoy favorable insurance policies, which provide free medication and more reimbursement for medical bills, according to her.

In Beijing, guardians are eligible for a 2,400 yuan (\$370) annual subsidy from the municipal government if they deliver proper care, according to the

city's health and family planning commission.

China faces challenges in improving mental health, due to rising incidences of mental disorders caused by depression, tension, alcohol and dementia, she said.

A survey conducted by professionals from more than 40 psychiatric hospitals and universities in China between 2012 and 2014 found nearly 3.6 percent of Chinese suffer depression-related mental disorders.

Although the rate is lower than countries such as the United States, Australia and South Africa, it saw an increase compared with previous surveys, which may be attributed to increasing psychological pressure on the public due to rapid economic and social development, she said.

The World Health Organization estimates that more than 54 million people in China suffer from depression, and is estimated to cost the nation \$7.8 billion every year from lost work days, medical expenses and funeral expenses, it said in a statement on Friday.

According to Yu Xin, a professor in psychiatry at Peking University Sixth Hospital, said a major obstacle to prevention and treatment in China is the lack of importance paid to the issue by the public and patients.

"This means only a small portion of people with mental diseases are actually diagnosed and treated," Yu said.

Lack of facilities and talent at community-level medical institutions are also major obstacles, he added.

"In many other countries, patients with mental disorders first seek treatment at community health centers or their family doctors," he said. "But in China, most patients go to big comprehensive hospitals first, as other institutes may lack qualified psychiatrists."

Wang said health authorities will improve capabilities of grassroots hospitals to offer mental health services, such as encouraging top public hospitals to provide training to medical staff.

[Beijing to supply more land for residential housing](#)

Beijing announced plans Friday to supply 6,000 hectares of land by 2021 in a bid to meet the market demand of 1.5 million units of residential houses.

Beijing plans to supply 5,000 hectares of state-owned construction land and 1,000 hectares of collectively-owned construction land in the following five

years, according to the Beijing Municipal Commission of Urban Planning and Land and Resources Management.

Seventy percent of the land will be used for the construction of residential houses with property rights, while 30 percent of the land will be used to build rental houses.

In 2017, Beijing will offer about 1,200 hectares of residential land to build 300,000 units of residential housing.

Analysts said the rising supply of residential land is aimed at relieving the supply-demand contradiction in Beijing's property market and help stabilize housing prices.

In March, Beijing introduced a spate of measures, including higher down payments, higher mortgage rates and tougher purchase restrictions, to cool the red-hot property market.