

China to improve drug policy for better medical services

The Chinese government has decided to improve policy on the production, distribution and use of drugs.

A document released by the General Office of the State Council proposed systemic reform to improve the quality and therapeutic effect of drugs, and to ensure that supplies are timely and prices reasonable.

Improving the quality and therapeutic effect of drugs is the key task, according to the document, which called for stringent rules for the review and approval for new drugs.

The document said the review and approval of drugs in clinical demand should be streamlined, in addition to supporting generic drugs that had passed conformity assessments, as well as cracking down on offences in the producing and selling of counterfeit and low quality drugs.

The document suggested creating and expediting a network led by major and key enterprises, but supported by small and medium-sized enterprises.

In order to improve drug price transparency, a mechanism to ensure factory prices' traceability was proposed.

Public hospitals should prioritize essential medicines, which must be available to the public at all times, in adequate amounts and at affordable prices.

It said the markup on drugs should be contained, and medical insurance's role should be strengthened, with payment methods improved.

China plans to provide comprehensive medical care across the country through medical reform that will benefit both urban and rural residents.

The top legislature has been working with authorities on a law to help pharmacists properly prepare and allocate medicine, according to the country's health authorities.

In December, the State Council approved two documents, one on improving health care and medical service and another on medical reform, for the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-2020).

More improvements will be made to the medicine supply system, and the supply of low-price medicine, children's medicine, as well as urgent medicine will be ensured.

41.2 pct of Chinese hold urban hukou in 2016

China's registered permanent urban residents rose to 41.2 percent of the total population in 2016, after easing of "hukou" (household registration) policy, the Ministry of Public Security announced Thursday.

In 2015, only 39.9 percent of the population held urban status and the current urbanization drive is aiming for 45 percent by 2020.

At a video conference held on Thursday, the ministry of public security called for a more reasonable points system and for registration in most cities for students and migrant workers to become easier still.

The government is gradually bringing the unregistered population into the hukou system, including orphans, second children born illegally during the one-child policy and the homeless.

Last year, more than 1.43 million people formerly without hukou were registered, the ministry said.

Various benefits such as health care and education are based on hukou, and are supposed to be in line with long-term places of work and residence.

Injured finless porpoise found, in stable condition

After three days of searching, an injured finless porpoise was finally discovered Thursday afternoon in the Poyang Lake, China's largest freshwater lake.

Finless porpoise protection volunteers in Jiangxi Province discovered a large fishhook on the back of the endangered animal, using a long-focus lens on Feb. 5, but the the animal disappeared before they could help.

Jiangxi Provincial Fishery Department initiated a search for the animal after being informed by volunteers. Hydrobiology experts from the Chinese Academy of Sciences also joined the search.

Experts said the porpoise seemed to be in stable condition, and are making plans to capture the porpoise to offer it assistance.

Zhan Shupin, a department employee, said it was hard to catch it since it was in a water channel 400 meters wide and 20 meters deep.

Rarer than China's giant panda, the finless porpoise is a mammal similar to the dolphin, and now teeters on the brink of extinction, with a population of around 1,000. About 450 live in the Poyang Lake.

Overseas NGOs welcomed to China: MPS

China said overseas NGOs are welcome to carry out friendly exchanges and cooperation in China.

Efficient and convenient services will be provided for overseas NGOs and their legitimate rights and interests will be protected, according to a statement from the overseas NGO management office under the Ministry of Public Security (MPS).

So far, authorities in Beijing, Shanghai and south China's Guangdong Province have issued registration certificates to 32 representative offices of NGOs from outside the Chinese mainland, according to the MPS.

Registration services for overseas NGO representative offices became mandatory from Jan. 1, as a new law on overseas NGOs took effect the same day.

To support the process the MPS, which is responsible for registration, has released a registration guideline, set up registration counters at provincial-level police authorities and launched a supporting website.

Registration records of some overseas NGOs, which were previously kept at the civil affairs and industrial and commercial authorities, have also been transferred to the new authority in charge.

The MPS and other authorities have held a number of meetings with representatives from overseas NGOs as well as delegates from the European Union to China and foreign embassies and consulates, to listen to their suggestions on the new process.

In Shanghai and Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong Province, police have given foreign diplomats and representatives of overseas NGOs demonstrations of the new procedures.

Adopted by the top legislature in April, 2016, the new law requests all NGOs outside the Chinese mainland to secure approval to operate on the mainland.

The MPS said it will continue to improve the new service.

Former FAW chairman sentenced for taking bribes

Xu Jianyi, former chairman of one of China's largest auto producers FAW Group Corp., was sentenced Thursday to 11-and-a-half years in prison for accepting bribes.

Beijing No.1 Intermediate People's Court ordered that all of Xu's personal property listed in its verdict statement should be confiscated, and his illicit gains should be turned over to the national treasury.

The court found that from 2000 to 2013, Xu took advantage of his various posts to help others with business contracts, promotions, and directly or indirectly accepted assets worth 12.19 million yuan (around 1.77 million U.S. dollars).

Xu had served as vice general manager, general manager and chairman of FAW Group Corp.; a member of the standing committee of Communist Party of China (CPC) Jilin provincial committee; and Party chief of Jilin city from 2000 to 2013.

The court showed leniency, taking into consideration his confession, remorse and the fact that he voluntarily turned over all his ill-gotten gains.