



Healthy China 2030: “Without national health, there will be no comprehensive well-being”

Wei Wang¹, David Zakus²

On August 19–20, 2016, the China National Health and Wellness Conference was held in Beijing. Both President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang attended the meeting and delivered important speeches with key messages.

Their contributions are summarized here [1]:

1. The state health industry will be elevated to an unprecedented strategic height

“Healthy China 2030” was presented as the Program of Action for the next 14 years to promote the health of China with a population of 1.3 billion. President Xi stressed that “the people want the healthy development of strategic national development priorities, by putting health into all policies.” Premier Li pointed out the importance of “guiding financial institutions to increase credit financing support, including bonds, to strive to foster the health industry, which has become an important pillar industry of the national economy.” At the October 2015 Fifth Plenary Session of the China Communist Party’s 18th Meeting, Premier Li had initially clearly promoted healthy Chinese progress, and emphasized the importance of the development of the health industry.

In particular, at the meeting the need “to correctly handle the relationship

between government and the market in the field of basic medical and health services in order for the government to make a difference together with market dynamics in health care services,” was stated, indicating that the general direction of government policy reform will be toward developing an open and transparent environment of market competition, in which unnecessary government intervention in health care services will be reduced. System reform will focus on “efforts to achieve breakthroughs in (1) the hospital tier system (with various grades of clinics) in terms of diagnosis and treatment, (2) optimal hospital management systems, (3) universal health care, (4) drug supply, and (5) a comprehensive regulatory regime, which integrates this five-pillar construction of the basic medical health system.”

2. “Healthy China 2030” will positively impact the entire health industry

President Xi stressed that “we must unswervingly implement the principle of prevention, and apply a combination approbation of disease prevention and treatment, and strengthen early diagnosis, early treatment, and early rehabilitation.” Therefore industries related to disease prevention and

1. School of Medical and Health Sciences, Edith Cowan University, Perth, WA, Australia

2. Faculty of Community Services, School of Occupational and Public Health, Ryerson University, Toronto, ON, Canada

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:
Wei Wang, MD, PhD, FFPH
Building 21, Room 507, School
of Medical and Health Sciences,
Edith Cowan University, 270
Joondalup Drive, Perth, WA
6027, Australia
E-mail: wei.wang@ecu.edu.au

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diagnostics will benefit, such as those producing vaccines. The status of disease prevention at the national level will be ensured.

3. Revitalization of traditional Chinese medicine

China's pharmaceutical management policy has always been to pay more (and equal) attention to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). The meeting emphasized the need "to strive and promote the revitalization and development of Chinese medicine," with particular reference "to striving and to achieving a creative transformation of TCM per se, greater TCM related medical heritage and culture, and TCM innovation and development." All of this indicates more governmental support toward the modernization of TCM, while adhering to both TCM and Western medicine, and promoting complementary and coordinated developments.

Health care reforms are a key long-term social security issue for the Chinese government. A variety of reforms are being pursued at central and local government levels, but the overarching goal is in many ways very similar to the long-term goal for social security pensions; for example, creating a system where care and costs are standardized nationwide and supported by a deep market of supplemental (private sector) options for consumers.

Currently the Chinese health care system is struggling to keep up with rising medical costs, especially for serious illnesses and work-related injuries and aging [2, 3]. The social and economic transformation of the population, including improved life expectancy, "super-speed" aging, movement of the population from rural to

urban areas, and the easing of the one-child policy in 2013, have also resulted in a sharp increase in demand for medical services in excess of the system's ability to provide those services on a fair and equitable basis and the need to modernize TCM, while adhering to both TCM and Western medicine [3–5]. Moreover, among those who do have access to treatment, dissatisfaction rates are high because of high costs, poor infrastructure, and poor service. We are looking forward to seeing the detailed guidelines on how to implement "Healthy China 2030": "without national health, there will be no comprehensive well-being."

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