

Govt gives a boost to TCM use

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has a new prescription for health as medical institutions will now be required to bolster their TCM departments.

A circular released yesterday by the State Council ordered local governments to include hospitals for traditional medicine in their health service networks.

It also requires health institutions to improve TCM training, facilities and medicines.

"Every community health service station and village health clinic should be able to offer TCM services," the circular said.

Governments at various levels will increase investment in public hospitals for traditional medicine to improve facilities, support research and train doctors.

"The guideline plays an important part in playing up the use of TCM in the recent medical reform," Wang Guoqiang, director of the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine said yesterday in a written reply to China Daily.

"It will boost TCM development with concrete support from governments at all levels."

One of the highlights is that "the circular positions TCM equally with western medicines in legal status, academic development and in practice," said Wang, who is also vice-minister of health.

"Traditional medicines have outstanding advantages. They cost much less than western medicines," Professor Ha Xiaoxian from Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine was quoted by Xinhua as saying.

"They will fit in with the health service in rural areas and communities."

In the circular, the State Council said traditional medicines will be included with the State's basic medicines and traditional medicine hospitals will be in the list of designated hospitals under the country's basic health insurance programs for both rural and urban residents.

The government will welcome private investors to invest in hospitals or pharmacies for traditional medicine.

It also encourages veteran doctors to open their own clinics and allows doctors to work at dispensing shops that sell traditional medicines.

According to the circular, the government plans to register ancient medical books, develop a catalog and set up a digital database for them.

The government also encourages apprenticeships for training doctors as an alternative to medical schools, especially in rural areas.

Traditional Chinese medicine has unique theories and practices such as herbal medicines, acupuncture, massage and dietary therapy, independent from western medicine.

For some time, it was pushed to the side as many of its theories could not be explained by modern medicine, but it has recently become popular among Chinese as an alternative way to keep fit.

"Traditional medicine performs well in treating chronic diseases and its theories help people develop healthy life styles,"

Ha said.

Source: China Daily

Copyright by People's Daily Online, All Rights Reserved