

SEMINAR ANNOUNCEMENT

This seminar is being presented by a distinguished health care policymaker and researcher. The presentation will focus on major health care reform plans in China. We hope that you will be able to attend.

Title: "Reform of China's Health Care System: Issues, Challenges, and the Future"

Presenter:

Hufeng Wang, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, School of Public Administration
Renmin University of China

Thursday, February 26, 2009
1:30-2:30 PM
D330 Mayo Memorial Building

Light refreshments and sodas will be provided.

Hufeng Wang, Ph.D., is a distinguished health policymaker and researcher in China. He received his Ph.D. in Economics from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). He worked as a division director, Department of Health Insurance, Ministry of Labour and Social Security of P. R. China, and contributed to the formation of a series of important laws and regulations concerning social welfare. He has served as the director of Health Reform and Development Center, Renmin University of China, which is well known for training government officials and influencing policymaking. He is also the professor in charge of MPA in "Public Health and Medical Policy" track at Renmin University, and the associate director of the Institute of Social Security. Last year, he was invited to submit one proposal on the Health System Reform of China to the State Council. Dr. Wang's research specialties are broad, including healthcare policy; healthcare reform; health insurance; international comparison study; pharmaceutical industry policy, innovation and reform; hospital quality, efficiency and oversight; chronic disease management; and non-traditional, long distance education.

Abstract

In the past 50 years, China has made great achievements in controlling infectious diseases and improving the public's health. However, due to the negative effects brought on by the economy reform and social transition, Chinese people have been encountering greater difficulties to access affordable health services. Nearly 400 million people do not have any kind of health insurance. Soaring medical costs have plunged many rural and urban Chinese back into poverty. To address some fundamental problems in the current system, the Chinese government issued a medical reform plan in October 2008,

and its revised version in January 2009, based on public feedback. Through the reform plan, the country will ensure the non-profit nature of its public medical service, and central and local governments will play dominant roles in providing public health and basic medical services. In the next three years, the government will spend 850 billion yuan (\$124.26 billion) to speed up building a universal health insurance network in both urban and rural areas, improve the public hospital reform and set up a state catalog, production and distribution of basic medicines.

This presentation will provide an overview of the Chinese health care system, its achievements, and issues. It will describe the evolution of this system since the early 1980s when the centralized planning economy gradually changed to a decentralized market-based economy. The major lessons and experience in the past reform will be discussed. This presentation will emphasize how the newly published health reform plan was formalized, how this plan will change the current health system, what strategies should be taken to implement the reforms, as well as what challenges would be expected. Meanwhile, the presenter would like to exchange opinions with attendees regarding the health care reform in the U.S. under the new administration, and talk about the similarities and differences between reform strategies adopted by the two countries.