

DECLARATION OF SUPPORTING PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF HEALTH CARE—ASSOCIATED INFECTION TO ENSURE PATIENT SAFETY

Health is the lasting goal pursued by human being, and also the motivation and source for sustainable economic and social development. The construction of national medical and health policies and system and the management of medical service play an important role in protecting and ensuring health of the nationals. In the process of medical health development system, providing the safe, highly—effective, convenient and fair medical service to the nationals is the shared responsibility of governmental authorities, medical agencies, health managers, medical staff and the related sectors in the society.

In the current situation of increasingly developed medical technologies, all countries are faced with various challenges in ensuring patient safety. The World Health Organization (WHO) set up the World Alliance for Patient Safety in 2004 and initiated the First Global Patient Safety Challenge in 2005. The First Challenge "Clean Care is Safer Care" calls for and promotes activities to prevent and control health care—associated infection, which is important to ensuring medical quality and safety. The problem of health care—associated infection is seen worldwide. It affects both the developed countries and the resource—limited countries. The First Global Patient Safety Challenge report "Clean Care is Safer Care" in 2006 pointed out that every

year, there were hundreds of millions of patients infected during the delivery of health care services, and thus patient treatment and care became more complicated, which led to the worsening of some patients' condition, prolonged hospitalization, long-term disability, and even death. Health care-associated infection is one important factor which compromises patient safety and affects medical quality as well as increasing medical expenses; and it is also one of the main obstacles to the development of high technology in health care. Therefore, World Alliance for Patient Safety has made the prevention and control of health care-associated infection as the First Global Patient Safety Challenge. This meaningful activity has already received strong response from countries all over the world.

China is a developing country with a population of 1.3 billion, which accounts for 22% of the world's total population, and has a colossal task of providing medical and health services to a big population. In 2006, the total number of hospitals in China reached 19,246 and they were responsible for the diagnosis and treatment of 1.471 billion out-patients and 55.62 million in-patients. Therefore, strengthening prevention and control of health care-associated infection is of great significance to ensure patient safety, improve medical treatment and reduce medical expenses. The Chinese government attaches great importance to prevention and control of health care-associated infection. Prevention and control of hospital-acquired infection of communicable disease was an important part in "The Law of the PRC on the Prevention and Treatment of Infectious Diseases" framed in 2004. "The Regulation on Hospital Infection Management"

enacted and implemented in 2006 further clarified the responsibilities, obligations and principles from the perspective of management in order to ensure patient safety in diagnosis and treatment and reduce the health care—associated infection and its risk to minimum levels. Ministry of Health of China also established technical standard committee on infection control and issued a series of technical standards.

In order to further strengthen prevention and control of health care—associated infection and actively respond to the First Global Patient Safety Challenge, today at the launch of the Global Patient Safety Initiative in Beijing, on behalf of Ministry of Health of PRC, we call on government agencies at all levels, medical and health institutions, academic societies and all medical staff to participate in prevention and control work of health care—associated infection in order to raise the safety of health care services to the maximum level. We will make an effort in reducing the risk of health care—associated infection through the following measures;

1. Attaching great importance to all works related to prevention and control of health care—associated infection;

2. Developing all kinds of activities which contribute to infection control on national level;

3. Continuing to develop and implement technical standards and regulations for the prevention and control of health care—associated infection in order to make infection control more scientific and standardized;

4. Prioritizing prevention. In the strategic framework of World Health Organization, implementing effective measures in infection

control, such as strengthening hand hygiene, blood safety, injection and immunization safety, diagnosis and care safety, environmental health and safety, etc;

5. Strengthening the international exchange and collaboration. Cooperating with the World Health Organization and countries all over the world and sharing experience and technology in addressing health care—associated infection.

In the new context of the rapid social and economic development, increasingly developing medical science and increasing demand for health service of the general public, the medical health development will also face new opportunities and challenges. I will support and work with departments concerned, academic societies, medical institutions and medical staff to reduce health care—associated infection, ensure patient safety in order to protect and promote people's health.



Vice minister of Ministry of Health
of the People's Republic of China