

Chapter 1: Leading and Managing in Contemporary Health and Social Care

Healthcare provision in China

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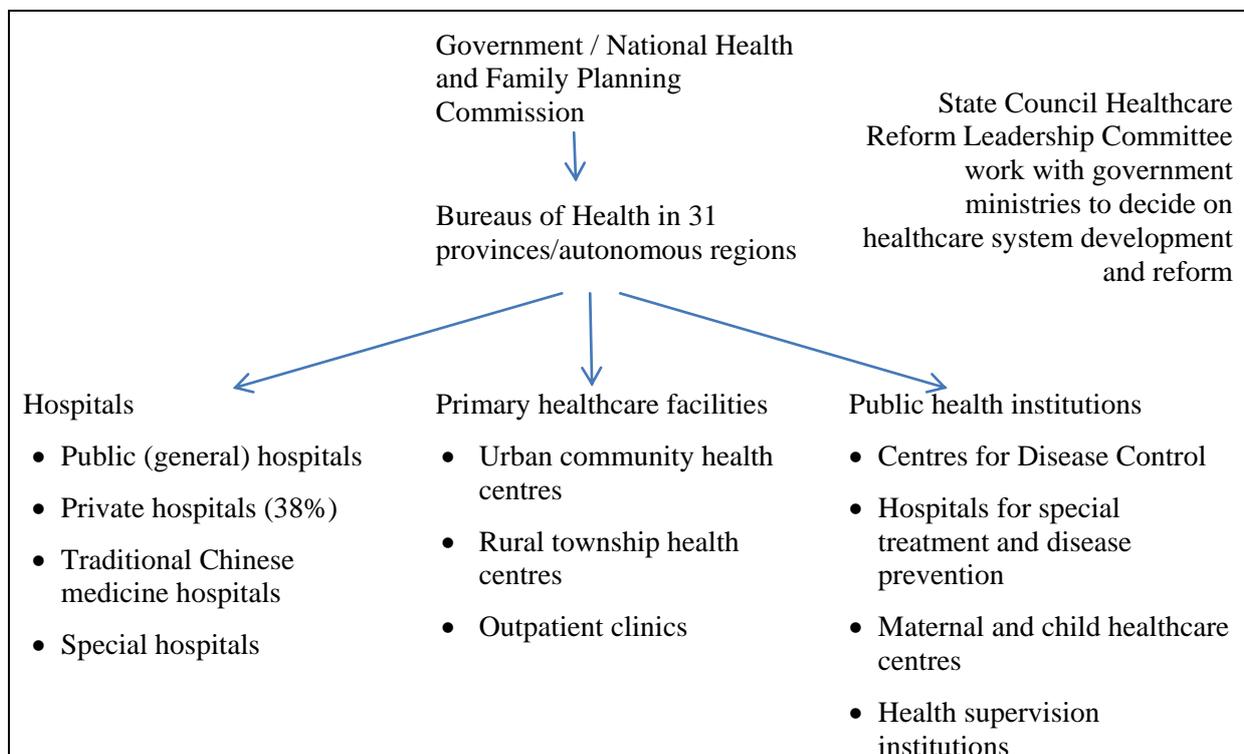
Healthcare provision in China is complex, and in recent years, with China's GDP averaging over 9 per cent annually (2013 figures), the Chinese people have been demanding more universal and sophisticated healthcare services than is currently provided.

The healthcare system in China is under the leadership of National Health and Family Planning Commission, but healthcare governance has been decentralized among Bureaus of Health in 31 provinces/autonomous regions. Healthcare provision varies extensively between urban and rural areas, and between developed regions and developing regions.

Generally, healthcare provision is divided into three different systems including hospitals, primary healthcare facilities and public health institutions. The hospitals are mainly responsible for citizen's healthcare, which spreads all over various provinces, cities and are composed of public hospitals and private hospitals. In 2011, China had a total of 21,979 hospitals including 14,328 general hospitals (65.2%), 2,831 traditional Chinese medicine hospitals (12.9%) and 4,283 special hospitals (19.5%). The majority of hospitals are public (13,539; 61.6%), while the total number of private hospitals standing at 8,440 (38.4%).

Compared to hospitals, primary healthcare facilities have fewer healthcare staff and medical resources, which are like community healthcare centres and provide basic healthcare for citizens who live in specific areas. The total number of primary healthcare facilities in China in 2011 was 918,003, which included 32,860 urban community health centres, 37,295 rural township health centres, and 184,287 outpatient clinics.

The public health institutions are responsible for diseases prevention and control. The total number of public health institutions was 11,926 in 2011, including Centres for Disease Control, hospitals for special treatment and disease prevention, maternal and child healthcare centres, and health supervision institutions.



This, in combination with strong needs for better and more inclusive healthcare, has led China to embark on a major healthcare reform programme, with the goals of establishing a universal health security system, which will include focus on epidemiology, the impact of the environment, lifestyle and socio-economic circumstances on health. For instance, people living in rural areas have poor living conditions and therefore have a higher risk of catching diseases, while they also cannot afford sufficient healthcare services, compared to people living in urban areas who tend to access better healthcare provision.

Ultimately, the government intends to provide basic healthcare for all its citizens by 2020. A robust combination of public and commercial insurance schemes for people to choose from will be encouraged, and after reform of the medical system, it guarantees that most people will be able to afford healthcare and be able pay for it. On the other hand, China is still at the development stage, which means that there are many aspects needing proper consideration including finance, human resource and material resources to support healthcare provision for all and make progress.

Source includes: Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis (based in Sweden) (2013) *China's Healthcare System - Overview and Quality Improvements*. Available at: www.tillvaxtanalys.se/en/home/publications/direct-response/direct-response/2013-05-20-chinas-healthcare-system---overview-and-quality-improvements.html (accessed 6 September 2015).