

Dates of Meeting:

07-08-1950 – 18-08-1950

Type of Meeting:

1st National health conference

Place of Meeting:

Beijing

Attendance:

The directors of the Departments of Health from all 6 military region were invited to this meeting

Major Agenda Items:

to draw up a major programme for the organization of health services within the military regions and the country as a whole

Speeches/Reports:

Mao Zedong “Our nation's health work teams are large. They have to concern themselves with over five hundred million people [including the] young, old and ill. This is a huge enterprise, and one that is extremely important. Thus our responsibility weighs heavily . . . At present, doctors of Western medicine are few, and [thus] the broad masses of the people, and in particular the peasants, rely on Chinese medicine to treat illness. Therefore, we must strive for the complete unification of Chinese medicine.”

He Cheng, Vice Minister of Health, said, ‘Among health workers, as among other workers, a widespread political study and ideological rectification should be carried out in order to correct the misunderstanding that medical and pharmaceutical personnel have little to do with politics. Revolutionary humanitarianism must be promoted (among them)’ Chinese medicine has to absorb scientific theory. Western medicine needed to learn from Chinese medicine, to better approach the masses. ‘the distance between Chinese and Western medicines would day by day grow smaller, and the differences between Chinese and Western medicines would day by day disappear’, until they ‘open-heartedly and inseparably unite’

Zhu De his speech was most complimentary about the valuable experience of traditional medicine, but he too echoed the theme of organising Chinese-style doctors, uniting them with modern doctors, and improving their practice through scientific education

Other Decisions and/or Actions:

By the end of the meeting, “4 principles” for the development of public health were drawn up.

- These were, ‘towards the workers, farmers and soldiers (mianxiang gongnongbing)’,
- ‘prevention comes first (yufang wei zhu)’
- ‘the unification of Chinese and Western medicines. First, however, the vast body of native physicians had to be organised or “united.” Traditionally, Chinese medicine had been intensely and jealously private in its practice with nothing resembling a profession’s community of interest and shared knowledge. Breaking down this “feudal” social organisation was now, of course, one of the main tasks in traditional medicine. Therefore, an intensive campaign was waged to convince the old-style doctors to share their secrets and serve the people under socialism. Simultaneously, along with the other professions or occupations, they were rapidly organised into a general union or association.
- Mother Child Health

Remarks:

1. In correspondence to He’s speech, a teaching material was compiled to guide the ideological rectification of medical workers. In the preface, the compiler stated, ‘The book contains eleven articles, addressing the necessary stance, viewpoints and ideological methods that health workers should possess. That is, we should first establish the proletariat stance, establish the viewpoint of (serving) the mass, and then profoundly criticise the residual capitalist medical philosophy from the past or the present, and set up the new thought and practice of serving the people’
2. Between August 1950 and December 1951, the Ministry of Health issued various rules and regulations concerning the licensing of Chinese medical practitioners. The regulations stipulated that all Chinese medical practitioners had to be in possession of a Chinese Medical Doctor Certificate (zhongyishi zhengshu) issued by the Ministry of Health or a Temporary Chinese Medical Doctor Certificate (linshi zhongyi zhengshu) issued by the relevant provincial authority in order to practise under the new government

3. prevention and treatment of venereal diseases (xingbing). Prostitution was banned and brothels were converted into factories where prostitutes, of which more than ninety percent were infected with syphilis (meidu), were often employed afterwards.
4. The first measure was the introduction of a license for Chinese doctors, the "Certificate of Chinese doctor" (Zhongyishi Zhengshu)
5. A second step in the professionalization of the traditional medical system was the imposition of criteria (November 51) that Chinese medicine clinics (zhongyi zhensuo) had to meet.
6. The next step of the Ministry of Health (December '51) was to set up 'Schools for further training of Chinese doctors' (Zhongyishi Jinxiu Xuexiao). The initial design of these schools, which were called a bridge to the eventual unification of both medical systems, was to train Chinese doctors in applying their traditional treatments
7. The final stage in Chinese medicine reform was the introduction of a license for obtaining a license (October 52). As the content of the exam largely concerned Western medicine, 92 the percentage of unsuccessful participants was very high, with the result that the majority of Chinese doctors were no longer allowed to practice their profession..