New Year Message

Implementing the ‘Healthy China Initiative’ and promoting nursing development

Following 2017, a year full of achievements, 2018 promises a wealth of opportunities. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the Healthy China Initiative has been considered as an explicit national political priority. Human life is extremely precious, and as such, health is recognised as a prerequisite for the happiness of individuals and their families as well as a precondition for economic and social development. A healthy population is the mark of a prosperous nation and a strong country, and the maintenance and promotion of public health plays a key role in the successful establishment of a society that is moderately prosperous in all aspects, the realization of the two centenary goals and the achievement of national rejuvenation.

In August 2016, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council held the National Health and Wellness Conference. During the Conference, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasised that the health of the people must be at the centre of the country's entire policy-making machinery, stating that, 'The all-round moderately prosperous society could not be achieved without people's all-round health'. Therefore, establishing a 'big health' concept, the government has strived to ensure public health in all aspects, focusing on the whole life cycle and process of health. In October 2016, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council approved the Healthy China 2030 Planning Outline, which emphasised that the establishment of a fair, accessible, scientific and continuous health service system is necessary to ensure the health of the entire population at all stages of the life cycle. In a report he delivered during the 19th National Congress of the CPC, General Secretary Xi Jinping said: ‘As socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, the principal contradiction facing Chinese society has evolved. What we now face is the contradiction between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life … The Healthy China initiative will be carried out to ensure the delivery of comprehensive lifecycle health services for people'. This statement not only reflects the importance ascribed by the CPC Central Party to public health and well-being as well as healthcare reform and development, it also encourages us to devote ourselves to the development of health service. A review of the contradictions of supply and demand in healthcare reveals a contradiction between the growing demand for the health of the people and the imbalance and insufficiency of the current supply of medical services. Therefore, the following tasks should be immediately carried out: enhance the reforms of the medicine and healthcare system; establish distinct Chinese systems for providing basic healthcare, medical insurance and quality and efficient healthcare services and develop a sound modern hospital management system. Effective measures focused on system construction, strong support, excellent service and strict administration must be implemented.

As a developing country with a population of more than 1.3 billion, the task of providing quality healthcare for the people is arduous. However, the total amount of medical services in China, which continues to increase annually, ranks first across the world. In 2016, the total number of medical and healthcare services in China reached 7.93 billion, representing an increase of 3.1% since 2015. In addition, the number of patient hospitalisations reached 227 million, representing an increase of 8.0% since 2015. China's over 3.5 million nursing professionals are an important force in medical and healthcare services and development. Nurses fully utilize their specialized knowledge and available technologies in order to accomplish the professional duties of saving the dying, preventing and treating diseases and relieving suffering.

It should also be noted that the coming year presents a crucial stage for the development of healthcare and the establishment of the Healthy China Initiative, as new tasks and requirements have been set for the development of nursing care in accordance with the Healthy China initiative. The development philosophy should,
therefore, be shifted from ‘disease-oriented’ to ‘health-oriented’. Within such a system, nurses play a professional role in the overall care of life, including disease prevention, health promotion, diagnosis and treatment, rehabilitation and daily care. Nurses must also practice their profession in close association with the needs of the people. Nursing services must adapt to the development of medical treatment evaluation and an integrated medical service system. Therefore, perfect nursing professional services can be extended from the clinical treatment of diseases to the prevention and management of chronic diseases, rehabilitative care, long-term care, hospice care and others aspects of development.

Indeed, nurses play a vital role in the promotion of the Healthy China Initiative. As we ring in the new year, we must establish the concept of ‘great health’ and make concerted efforts to promote the moderately balanced development of nursing, which shall enable nurses to make significant contributions to improve the well-being of the Chinese people.

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