

China to standardize elderly care services

The Chinese government has released draft rules on elderly care institutions to standardize practices and services.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs rules will be online for public consultation until Nov. 12.

The draft requires nursing homes to provide telecommunications services, including but are not limited to telephone and the Internet. If residents have problems with telecommunications services, institutions should provide professional staff to help them.

Staff should treat the elderly with politeness and patience, keeping the private information of residents and visitors confidential. The environment and facilities must be safe and protect resident privacy, the draft said.

Outsourcing services should be commissioned to qualified organizations, and withdrawal systems established.

Nursing homes should make public service programs and charging standards, and set out rules for addressing complaints. Complaints should be responded within 10 working days.

The draft also requires nursing homes to offer hospice services. Hospice services providers should receive training before offering services.

China had more than 230.8 million people aged 60 or above at the end of 2016, 16.7 percent of the total population, according to a report released by the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

By international standards, a country or region is considered an “aging society” when the number of people aged 60 or above reaches 10 percent or more.

The country had 140,000 nursing homes holding a total of more than 7.3 million beds at the end of 2016, with a year-on-year increase of 20.7 percent and 8.6 percent respectively. However, there are only 31.6 beds for every 1,000 senior citizens.