

Guideline issued to ease shortages of medicine

China has launched a multidepartmental effort to deal with occasional shortages of some prescription drugs for patients, the State Council Information Office said on Wednesday.

A guideline to improve the supply to prevent shortages was issued on Wednesday by nine government agencies, including the National Health and Family Planning Commission, the National Development and Reform Commission, and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security.

China has about 3,000 drugs approved for common clinical use, with 130 of them occasionally in short supply, according to Zeng Yixin, deputy head of the National Health and Family Planning Commission.

“That’s mainly due to the market gap between supply and demand,” Zeng said.

“Thanks to joint efforts by all stakeholders, 50 of the 130 drugs are seeing normal supply levels again,” he said, adding that the latest guideline requires interdepartmental cooperation.

“It aims to ensure that the drugs are available—and safe—for people,” he said. “It helps coordinate the drug supply system with reforms in medical care and health insurance.”

Earlier reports said lower-priced drugs with relatively low clinical demand usually run out of stock, seriously undermining medical options and risking patients’ lives.

Under the new guideline, an online drug consumption monitoring network will be set up to determine which drugs might run out and issue timely warnings about emerging needs so that the authorities can intervene.

The guideline calls for the creation of a cross-province coordinating system to alleviate regional shortages of certain drugs.

“Usually, the list of the drugs in short supply is dynamic,” said Mao Ningying, associate professor at China Pharmaceutical University, adding that “the government should figure out why and provide targeted intervention”.

Zeng said a nationwide drug monitoring network will help forecast consumption trends and potential supply gaps, which will buy time for intervention.

For certain drugs, consumption is difficult to forecast, he said, adding, “We are setting up a regular stocking mechanism”.

He cited pralidoxime chloride as an example. The drug has been used to treat patients with pesticide poisoning who have attempted suicide.

"It's hard to predict suicides, but we have to stock the drug to save lives," he said.

For drugs in short supply nationally, Zeng said, emergency imports will be arranged. If that doesn't work, "the authorities will assign selected drug companies to produce more", he added.

China launches new destroyer



The Navy's new destroyer, a 10,000-tonne domestically designed and produced vessel, was launched Wednesday at Jiangnan Shipyard (Group), Shanghai.
[Photo/Sina.com]

The Navy's new destroyer, a 10,000-tonne domestically designed and produced vessel, was launched Wednesday at Jiangnan Shipyard (Group), Shanghai.

The destroyer is the first of China's new generation of destroyers. It is equipped with new air defense, anti-missile, anti-ship and anti-submarine weapons.

The vessel marks a milestone in improving the nation's Navy armament system and building a strong and modern Navy.

According to the plan, tests will be carried on the vessel, including equipment operation, berthing and sailing.

Zhang Youxia, head of the Equipment Development Department of the Central Military Commission, attended the launch ceremony.

China introduces emergency cybersecurity plan

China released Tuesday an emergency response plan for Internet security incidents.

The plan was formulated and released by the Office of the Central Leading Group for Cyberspace Affairs, to “improve handling of cybersecurity incidents, prevent and reduce damage, protect the public interest and safeguard national security, public safety and social order.”

The plan divides cybersecurity incidents into six categories, including pernicious procedural incidents, cyber attacks and information security incidents.

It also defines four-levels of security warnings and response systems according to threat conditions ranging from “general” to “extremely serious.”

Under the top “extremely serious” condition, security incidents may “paralyse many important Internet and information systems and halt operations,” or “cause loss or falsification of state secrets and important sensitive information, posing great threats to national security and social stability,” according to the plan.

Serious incidents will trigger measures including establishment of emergency headquarters, 24-hour monitoring and multi-department coordination in handling the aftermath.

In May, China suffered from a global ransomware attack that had paralyzed online payment systems at petrol stations across China and invaded colleges to encrypt papers and other documents.

The plan is also an implementation of the Cybersecurity Law adopted last year, which requires an emergency response mechanism from cyberspace authorities to avoid such threats.

Authorities are asked to organize rehearsals and strengthen prevention, especially during important meetings or national events.

Those who fail to implement the measures or conceal cybersecurity incidents will be punished, according to the plan.

Large floods may threaten central, southern China

China's flood control authority said on Tuesday that some central and southern provinces are likely to see large floods this year as downpours swell rivers.

There is a possibility of flooding along the Pearl and Huaihe rivers as well as the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River, said the State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters website.

Provinces including Guangdong, Guizhou, Hubei, Hunan and Jiangxi have seen water levels in 175 rivers rise beyond their warning levels with five rivers at record-high levels.

Flooding has forced more than 170,000 people to relocate in Hunan Province. In Jiangxi Province, 235,000 hectares of crops have been destroyed with direct economic losses of 4.5 billion yuan (660 million U.S. dollars).

More rainfall is forecast for southern and southwestern parts of the country in the next ten days, with precipitation in some regions likely to reach 300 millimeters within 24 hours, the National Meteorological Center said Tuesday.

The flood control authority urged local officials to be on high alert against disasters and enhance inspections of reservoirs, hydro-power stations and water conservancy projects.

Another 20 taken off missing people's list in China landslide

Another 20 people have been confirmed safe and taken off the missing list after the landslide in southwest China's Sichuan Province on Saturday, rescue headquarters said Tuesday.

The 20 people have been reached and confirmed as not among those buried under mud and rock, the headquarters said.

So far, a total of 35 people believed missing in the landslide have been confirmed safe.

The landslide engulfed 62 homes in Xinmo village in Maoxian County in the Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture of Aba Saturday morning, blocking a 2-km section of river and burying 1,600 meters of road.

Ten bodies have been found in the debris and 73 people are unaccounted for.