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*Department of Ambulatory Care and Prevention  
WHO Collaborating Center in Pharmaceutical Policy*



**Interdisciplinary Research and Training  
for Improving Access to and Use of Medicines in China**

A collaboration of the WHO Collaborating Center in Pharmaceutical Policy at Harvard Medical School and Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Boston; Harvard School of Public Health, Boston; Capital University of Medical Sciences, Beijing; Xuanwu Hospital, Beijing; the Beijing Public Health Insurance Committee; the Ministry of Health, China; and the World Health Organization, China

#### Background

China faces major challenges in providing access to essential medicines for its 1.3 billion people, leading to preventable deaths, impoverishing illness, and large-scale financial losses. Fortunately, government policy is rapidly expanding medicines coverage through new health insurance arrangements. Policy makers, managers, and analysts within these systems will require appropriate conceptual frameworks and specific technical skills to address complex medicines policy questions with applied research.

With initial support from the Harvard China Fund, we are expanding the novel Medicines and Insurance Coverage (MedIC) Initiative (<http://www.whocpp.org/research/medic.asp>) to China. MedIC is an interdisciplinary global partnership between universities and insurance systems focused on strengthening capacity for medicines policy decision making in health care organizations and insurance schemes, and engaging in focused research on policies to improve medicines access and use. Our team includes world-renowned experts in pharmaceutical policy research and pharmacoepidemiology, as well as leaders in health policy analysis in China.

#### Scope of Current Work in China

By June 2009, we will (1) conduct contextual research on medicines financing in the urban and rural health insurance systems in China; (2) develop and implement the first MedIC Course on Medicines Policy Analysis in the Beijing urban health system; (3) develop and plan MedIC Courses for the New Rural Cooperative Medical Scheme (RCMS); and (4) build lasting Harvard-China institutional relationships.

#### Future Work

Our ultimate goal is to strengthen evidence-based medicines policy decision making in China through training and research. We will train a cohort of trainers who would adapt and implement MedIC Courses at a large scale for students, academics, public health officials, and policy makers in China. We also seek to offer training opportunities in pharmaceutical policy analysis at Harvard for qualified Chinese colleagues.

Through applied research collaborations, we seek to develop evidence for policy decision making on issues such as: optimal reimbursement policies for medicines in the urban health insurance system; incentives to encourage cost-effective prescribing according to standard treatment guidelines; and a minimum medicines benefit package for members of the RCMS.

#### Potential for Collaboration

We invite governmental, non-governmental, and academic institutions, international organizations, and industry to collaborate and support the current efforts and future scale-up of training and research on medicines policy in China.

#### Contact Information

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