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OVERVIEW

The Harvard China Health Partnership (HCHP) advances people's health and well-being in China by fostering partnerships in research and education and training opportunities for academics and policymakers. Below are highlights of HCHP’s outstanding programming during the past year, made possible by generous philanthropic support.
Strengthening Evidence-Based Policymaking: Through innovative and policy-relevant academic research, HCHP faculty advance concrete solutions for China and the world.
Revitalizing Primary Care in China

Winnie Yip, director of HCHP and professor of the practice of global health policy and economics, continues to collaborate with academic, public, and private partners to revitalize primary care in China through a 21st century "barefoot doctor" system. With generous support from the William Hsiao China Fund and J.T. Tai and Company Foundation, a benchmark model will be developed in Yanchi, a rural county in Ningxia Province, where members of the community will be equipped with technology and training to make accurate diagnoses, deliver effective treatments, and issue referrals to hospitals for a set of common conditions in rural Ningxia. Professor Yip and partners are working to improve the larger health care ecosystem with sustainable financing, appropriate incentives, and effective management and governance mechanisms. They plan to host a workshop or seminar in 2021 to share an update on the project, inviting provinces from the western and central regions to participate.

A medical professional evaluates a patient’s health in rural China.
Examining the Role of Private Providers in Health Care

HCHP is developing an ambitious research program to study the relative role of the public and private sector in health and elderly care in China. This includes the role of the private sector in the internet-based health care delivery system, which has rapidly grown since the outbreak of COVID-19. With support from the Dr. Jiang Yanyong Visiting Professorship and Fund for Public Health and the J.T. Tai and Company Foundation, HCHP will examine the role of private health care provision and the implications on cost, quality, and equity of health care, paying special attention to rural and lower-income households. They will then develop policy recommendations that leverage the relative strength of the public and private sector to ensure affordable, equitable, and high quality care is available for all Chinese citizens. HCHP researchers will work closely with a wide network of academic partners and plan to host a seminar in China during 2021 to review early findings and consult with stakeholders.

A doctor checks the blood pressure of a patient in Ningxia Province, China.
Elevating Rigorous Research and Partnerships: Through forums and seminars, HCHP brings together experts to discuss new research findings and timely health and social-development issues in China.
Reflecting on China’s Ten Years of Health Care Reform

During 2019, Professor Yip and partners completed a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the progress China has made toward its goal of providing equitable and high-quality care by 2020. In a landmark review article published in The Lancet, they reported that great strides have been made toward equal access to care and financial protections for people of low socioeconomic status. They also outlined areas for improvements, including overall quality, control of non-communicable diseases, and delivery efficiency. With support from the Stephen and Nathalie Wong Global Health Fund, HCHP disseminated findings through a number of events with major academic institutions in China and on the international stage. This included a joint seminar with the Center for International Knowledge on Development and the Development Research Center of the State Council, the national decision-making body on all important policies in China.

Speakers at the joint seminar included (from left to right) Dr. Wannian Liang, Director General of Health Reform, National Health Commission, China; Professor Chong-En Bai, Dean of the School of Economics and Management of Tsinghua University; and Professor Winnie Yip.
The COVID-19 Outbreak: Chinese and Global Decisions During Uncertainty

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, HCHP has organized over a dozen seminars with leading public health scholars to examine China’s response to COVID-19 and draw lessons for the world. One of the most influential of these events occurred on April 4, 2020 with a focus on "Strengthening System Response to Epidemic Outbreak: Lessons from COVID-19." The goal of this special webinar was to advance global collaboration and promote unbiased evidence-based learning about how to effectively prepare and respond to emerging health challenges, such as COVID-19. Over a dozen speakers from institutions in the U.S. and China examined and reflected on policy decisions related to infectious disease control, epidemic response, and health care system responses.

Education and Training for a Healthier China: HCHP equips academics and practitioners with the tools they need to bring evidence-based decision making and innovative solutions to health policy in China.
Executive Training Course on Sustainable and Effective Health Care Financing

In November 2019, HCHP led an executive training with the National Healthcare Security Administration in China, the recently reorganized public health insurer, which covers over 95 percent of the Chinese population. During the four-day training, participants reviewed health care reform strategies that aim to maximize efficiency, quality, and financial risk protection for all populations in China. The training featured leading experts, including Harvard Chan Professors John McDonough and Winnie Yip and Professor Emeritus William Hsiao.

Experts at the training included Professors John McDonough (top center) and Winnie Yip (bottom left) and Professor Emeritus William Hsiao (bottom right).
Visiting Scholars Program

Every year, HCHP welcomes researchers and doctoral students from key partner institutions as visiting scholars. The in-depth exposure to the academic culture and resources of the School enables them to move forward their research and deepens ties between the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and leading institutions in China. As a result, the next generation of health economists and policy makers in China are better prepared to act as locally embedded change agents driving innovation and evidence-based decision making in Chinese health policy. Three of this year’s visiting scholars can be found below, who are studying a variety of topics, such as elder care, physician behavior, and insurance pricing schemes.

Lingchen Liu
Post-Doctoral Fellow, Center for Population and Development Policy Studies, Fudan University

Duo Xu
PhD Candidate, National School of Development, Peking University

Jing Wang
Associate Professor, Institute of Sociology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
Transitions in Leadership: HCHP honors the contributions of William Hsiao to advancing the health of people throughout China and the world.
During the summer of 2019, William Hsiao, K.T. Li Research Professor of Economics Emeritus, retired from the Harvard Chan School after forty years on the faculty. Dr. Hsiao served as a leading global expert in universal health insurance and was actively engaged in designing health system reforms and universal health insurance programs for over twenty countries around the world.

While on the faculty, Dr. Hsiao helped to lay the groundwork for HCHP’s policy research and programming. He conducted a nationwide study on health care financing in China, which resulted in the reform of China’s health insurance benefits for 900 million rural residents. He also launched a large-scale social experiment on over 600,000 people to explore ways to improve the financing and delivery of basic health care for low-income rural residents in China. This model is being replicated in additional regions of China.

Dr. Hsiao has published more than 180 articles and has served on editorial boards of several professional journals. He worked as an advisor to three U.S. presidents, the U.S. Congress, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Health Organization, and the International Labor Organization. Dr. Hsiao has served as a member of the Institute of Medicine, the U.S. National Academy of Science, a board member of the National Academy of Social Insurance and Society of Actuaries, and was a recipient of honorary professorships from several leading Chinese universities.
"Thank you for supporting the Harvard China Health Partnership and sustaining its decades-long efforts to improve the health and well-being of over 1.3 billion people in China and to provide valuable global lessons. Our Boston-based team and extensive network of partners in China are deeply grateful for your generosity."

Winnie Yip
Director of the Harvard China Health Partnership
Professor of the Practice of Global Health Policy and Economics
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health