Hospital a refuge for ailing drug users

By ZHENG CAIXIONG

The first hospital on the Chi- nese mainland to admit drug-addicted patients in places of diagnosis and rehabilitation to expand to more than 150 beds in 2016, leading a government effort to create similar treatment facilities in all 21 provincial-level cities.

Nanpu Hospital, which is affiliated to Guangdong No. 2 People’s Hospital, has only 82 beds, but though it once had more than 200, it is now down to 150 beds, head of the hospital. “It is clear that the hos- pital aims to meet the demand from the growing number of drug addicts,” Wang said. “We hope to open a new ward in the near future, so the patients can stay in the hospital, or, at least, be treated in the hospital. If we can,” he added.

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Drug production on the mainland — notably in Guangdong province — was once a major production hub. Officials in Huizhou — where the production is largely concentrated — said the situation had improved considerably.

Most of the patients are diagnosed for hepatitis, tuberculosis, sexually trans- mitted diseases and other infectious diseases, said Dr. Huang, who heads the hospital’s management assessment, which is responsible for looking after patients. Guangdong province had registered more than 170,000 drug addicts by mid-Decem- ber, accounting for about one- thirty of the country’s total, Deng said. About 8,000 of them are disabled or have serious physical illnesses, including HIV and other infectious diseases.

A patient with heart disease sent to Nanpu Hospital from another city after taking an estimated 1,000 mg of methamphetamine over a 3-day period, said Li, who is in her 40s, and her husband returned to the village at the start of 2015 after learn- ing of the improvements. They started to grow rice and peanuts, said Li. “We have overcome addiction to drugs and have taken drugs regularly. I have a clear answer for them. Drug addicts are ordinary people,” said Deng, who is in his 60s, and his wife, who is in her 50s, and their two children.

 groceries, for example, are sold at half price to drug addicts, and a variety of drugs are sold at prices lower than market rates.

A significant drug problem in Guangdong province is the lack of suf- ficient health care facilities for drug addicts, said Dr. Deng. About 18,000 of them are diagnosed for hepatitis, tuberculosis, sexually trans- mitted diseases and other infectious diseases, said Dr. Huang, who heads the hospital’s management assessment, which is responsible for looking after patients. Guangdong province had registered more than 170,000 drug addicts by mid-Decem- ber, accounting for about one- thirty of the country’s total, Deng said. About 8,000 of them are disabled or have serious physical illnesses, including HIV and other infectious diseases.

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