

CHINA

Bulk buying slashes dental implant cost

By WANG XIAOYU
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

China's first bulk procurement program targeting dental implants has seen an average price cut of 55 percent, the National Healthcare Security Administration said this week.

The administration said that 55 companies participated in the latest bidding held in Chengdu, Sichuan province, on Wednesday, and 39 of them won their bids.

It said that this round of procurement will cover 72 percent of annual demand for dental implants across the country. "Patients are expected to save 4 billion yuan (\$590 million) as a result," it added.

Patients can access dental implants at lower prices starting in late March or mid-April.

The procedure of dental implantation to replace missing or decaying teeth incurs the costs of medical consumables such as dental implants and crowns, as well as medical service fees.

In China, the total cost of dental implant surgery varies from 4,000 to 30,000 yuan.

A survey led by the administration in September showed that about 60 percent of respondents had complained about irregular pricing in the industry and called for centralized procurement programs to make the ser-

vice more affordable.

"The charge of dental implantation was irregular and patients were confused about different types of fees involved," said Jiang Changsong, a healthcare insurance expert at Capital Medical University.

"The procurement program will help make pricing schemes more transparent and open," he said.

According to the administration, the median price of relatively costly dental implant brands from Switzerland has dropped from 5,000 yuan to around 1,850 yuan, and the average price of the most popular products, usually produced by South Korean companies, has fallen by half to around 770 yuan.

"The variety of products is rich and can match clinical demands," it said.

In addition to slashing prices through bulk procurement, the administration said in September that medical service fees per tooth for the procedure should be capped at under 4,500 yuan at top-level public hospitals, though more developed regions with higher labor costs are allowed to request a higher maximum limit.

"With the implementation of these comprehensive measures, the total costs of getting a dental implant will be cut by half," said the administration.

FROM THE FRONT LINE | DELEGATE'S TALE

Lawyer works to ensure communities get along

By ZHAO RUIXUE in Jinan
zhaoruixue@chinadaily.com.cn

The report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, which has a special chapter focusing on exercising law-based governance on all fronts and advancing the rule of law, is inspiring and giving people who work in the sector confidence to firmly forge ahead, according to Yang Xi-yong, director of the lawyer association of Yantai, Shandong province.

"The report says we will apply and further develop the 'Fengqiao model' for promoting community-level governance in the new era, and that we will improve the mechanisms for appropriately addressing disputes among members of the public under the new circumstances," said Yang, who is also a delegate to the 20th CPC National Congress.

For 17 years, Yang has been working on handling public complaints and maintaining open and regular channels for learning about the concerns of people at the community level and protecting their rights and interests.

He has earned a reputation for being a "good brother" among migrant workers for helping them address disputes with their employers.

At a community mediation office in Yantai, silk banners bearing words like "Mediation promotes harmony" and "Shaking hands makes peace" are hung on the wall. Yang is one of the lawyers who work in the office addressing the concerns of residents and workers.

When he arrived at the office after a meeting in late October last year, two migrant workers were waiting for him to request his help with recovering the wages of more than 20 workers, totaling 457,600 yuan (\$66,400).

Yang called the construction company the migrant workers worked for to verify their workload and what they were owed. After hours of negotiation and mediation, the construction company agreed to pay the wages.

"The report has pointed out that problems should be resolved as they emerge at the community level," said Yang, adding that is why he has been working on improving the services at his community mediation office.

Yang and his team have resolved 386 disputes at his office since August.

To help more workers and residents, Yang and his team are building an online mediation platform on which people can apply for legal aid.

"We are in a particularly good era in which the Party and governments attach great importance to the rights and interests of migrant workers, and the interests of people at the grassroots," Yang said.

In recent months, Yang has been conveying the spirit of the congress to migrant workers and residents in Yantai at construction sites, social organizations and schools.

"I will try my best to deal with every case related to the interests of residents and workers, so that they will be assured of fairness and justice," he said.

Babysitters club



A teacher trains students how to babysit in Fuyang, Anhui province, on Wednesday. As Spring Festival approaches, vocational schools in the city have started domestic skills training to meet increasing demand. WANG BIAO / FOR CHINA DAILY



Passing pilgrims

Monks from Yushu, Qinghai province, visit the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, Tibet autonomous region, on Thursday. Pilgrims gathered in the regional capital to visit places such as the Potala Palace and Jokhang Temple.

LI LIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

LOCAL TWO SESSIONS

Focus placed on integrating GBA

Shenzhen to grow as a pilot zone for socialism with Chinese characteristics

By QIU QUANLIN in Guangzhou
qiuquanlin@chinadaily.com.cn

Promoting the further construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and a demonstration pilot zone for socialism with Chinese characteristics in Shenzhen will be key projects for Guangdong province over the next five years, according to a senior government official.

"A golden inner bay of 100 kilometers around the Pearl River estuary will be created, with more efforts being made to promote high-quality development and integration within the Greater Bay Area," said Wang Weizhong, governor of Guangdong, during an annual session of the Guangdong Provincial People's Congress on Thursday.

Delivering a government work report to the first session of the 14th Guangdong Provincial People's Congress, which opened in Guangzhou, the provincial capital, Wang said construction of an innovation and

entrepreneurship base for Hong Kong and Macao youth will provide more convenience and opportunities for residents from the two special administrative regions to work and live in Guangdong.

"We will also promote the construction of Shenzhen as a leading demonstration zone for socialism with Chinese characteristics through reform and innovation, accelerating the construction of major innovation platforms and an economic belt in ports between Shenzhen and Hong Kong," said Wang.

Guangdong, an economic powerhouse, has set a goal of a 5 percent GDP growth rate in 2023, according to the government work report.

The province's fixed-asset investment is expected to increase by 8 percent year-on-year in 2023, with its import and export volume growing by 3 percent, according to the report.

Over the past five years, Guangdong has resolutely implemented major national strategies, promoting

the construction of three cooperative platforms in Hengqin in Zhuhai, Qianhai in Shenzhen and Nansha in Guangzhou, according to Wang.

Several large infrastructure facilities including the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong High-speed Railway have been put into operation.

An overall development plan for a Guangdong-Macao in-depth cooperation zone in Hengqin will be released, helping adjacent Macao to develop a more diversified economy, according to Wang.

"Using Hengqin's proprietary core technologies to promote the development of the manufacturing industry will benefit both the diversified growth of Macao's industries and its integration into overall national development," said Lei Zhen, chief executive officer of Zhuhai Nanometals Technology.

Sci-tech research and high-tech manufacturing in Hengqin would help drive mutual benefits to Macao businesses and their mainland counterparts, according to Lei, also a member of the Guangdong provincial committee of the Chinese Peo-

ple's Political Consultative Conference.

"Hengqin can utilize Macao's advantages in international platforms and capital, and the mainland's advantages in policies, as well as industrial and supply chains," he said.

Nanometals Technology has realized the industrialization of proprietary core material technologies and applied them to the downstream manufacturing industry. "Core materials made in Hengqin can help upgrade the country's manufacturing development," he said.

High-tech manufacturing has greatly helped boost economic growth in Guangdong, with the province's GDP being estimated to have hit 12.8 trillion yuan (\$1.89 trillion) in 2022, a year-on-year increase of 2 percent and ranking first in China for the 34th consecutive year, according to the government work report.

The province's economic structure has been continuously optimized over the past five years, with the added value of advanced manufacturing and high-tech manufacturing accounting for 55 percent and 29.5 percent of the industries above designated size, respectively.

Zhejiang targets 'minimum' 5% GDP growth

By MA ZHENHUAN in Hangzhou
mazhenhuan@chinadaily.com.cn

East China's Zhejiang province will achieve a minimum GDP growth rate of 5 percent in 2023, said Wang Hao, the provincial governor, on Thursday.

In 2023, the expansion of the province's general government revenue and the increase of the income of its urban and rural residents will keep pace with economic growth, Wang said, while inflation will be kept below 3 percent, and surveyed urban unemployment below 5 percent.

Wang announced the targets while delivering the government

work report at the annual session of the Zhejiang Provincial People's Congress, which opened on Thursday.

"In 2022, Zhejiang withstood unexpected shocks and challenges," Wang said. "It is estimated that the GDP of the province for 2022 expanded by about 3 percent, and the per capita disposable income of urban and rural residents grew by 4.1 percent and 6.6 percent, respectively."

In the report, it was noted that the added value of industrial enterprises above designated size in Zhejiang in the past year increased by about 4.3 percent. To strengthen the confidence of market entities, over 400

billion yuan (\$59 billion) in tax breaks and tax exemptions were provided, and government subsidies worth more than 108 billion yuan were handed out.

A campaign to "send 1,000 business delegations and 10,000 companies to explore the international market" has been launched to stimulate foreign trade and investment.

The province's import and export estimated to have grown 13 percent year-on-year during the past year.

For 2023, Zhejiang will continue to focus on economic recovery, according to the report.

Priorities will be given to further stimulate and expand consumption, especially fostering new types of

consumption, and to attract foreign investment and expand the international market.

In the work report, Wang outlined Zhejiang's major goals for the next five years.

By 2027, the province will work toward a target GDP of 12 trillion yuan, with its per capita GDP reaching 170,000 yuan and per capita disposable income reaching 85,000 yuan.

In particular, per capita disposable income of rural residents is expected to reach 55,000 yuan, and the income ratio between urban and rural residents is expected to further narrow, dropping to lower than 1.9.

New laws promote business environment in Pudong

By LIN SHUJUAN in Shanghai
linshujuan@chinadaily.com.cn

Shanghai has empowered lawmakers in Pudong New Area so that they can optimize the business environment and promote further reform and innovation in frontier areas, the city's legislature said.

The Shanghai People's Congress enacted 40 new laws in 2022, including nine for Pudong New Area, reflecting an improvement in quality and efficiency, said Jiang Zhuoqing, director of the Standing Committee of the Shanghai People's Congress, while delivering the committee's work report at the ongoing first session of the 16th Shanghai People's Congress on Thursday.

A total of 15 laws have been tailored for Pudong New Area to support its high-level reform and opening-up since 2021.

The 15 laws include regulations for market access, laws to enhance intellectual property protection, guidelines to promote the develop-

ment of new industries and measures to improve city governance.

"The 15 laws, which have been made to optimize the district's business environment, improve its urban governance, promote industrial upgrading, encourage independent innovation and develop green ecology, and adhere to the mission of leading in making Pudong a pioneer of socialist modernization," Mo Fuchun, deputy director of the Standing Committee of the Shanghai People's Congress, the city's legislature, said during a media briefing over the weekend.

In April 2021, the State Council, China's Cabinet, released a guideline to support Pudong's high-level reform and opening-up, which stipulated that a legal system in line with its status should be set up.

On June 7, 2021, Shanghai's legislature was authorized to create laws specific to Pudong New Area in accordance with its needs for reform and innovation.

According to the authorization by

the country's top legislature, while sticking to the constitution and current laws and regulations, Shanghai legislators can make changes to relevant laws, administrative regulations and department rules, which will only be effective in Pudong.

For sectors where no laws or regulations are in place, Pudong is allowed to put in place administrative measures and submit records of them according to related processes. Successful experiences and practices can be consolidated in the form of laws and regulations at the right moment, according to the guideline.

Over the past year and a half, Shanghai's legislators have worked closely to ensure efficient and quality legislation, according to Yan Rui, director of the legislative affairs commission of the Standing Committee of the Shanghai People's Congress.

"The biggest role of legislation for Pudong New Area is to address some of the sticking points or bottlenecks in our current laws and regulations,"

said Liu Yuqing, deputy director of the Pudong New Area People's Congress Standing Committee. "We adapt or create them to provide impetus for our industrial and economic development and provide more confidence for the market."

The Shanghai legislature will continue to improve the quality and efficiency of Pudong New Area's legislation, and provide a more powerful rule of law for its high-level reform and opening-up, according to Yan.

"We will strengthen forward-looking planning and overall layout, expand the participation of grassroots legislative contact points, market players and other sectors of society in the legislation," Yan said. "We'll work hard to ensure the institutional innovation advantages of Pudong New Area legislation are transformed into high-quality development."

Wang Ying in Shanghai contributed to this story.