

China lashes bribery in medical procurement

www.chinaview.cn 2006-03-29 09:04:55

BEIJING, March 29 -- China's Health Minister Gao Qiang has strongly criticized the practise of bribery during procurement and sale of medicine and medical appliances.

Speaking at a work meeting on Tuesday in Beijing, Gao Qiang said curbing such bribery is a priority.

Gao Qiang points out that some companies or individuals promote high prices and inferior medicines or medical equipment to medical institutions, leading to spiraling costs and injury to the interests of patients.

Some medical staff abuse their positions in order to seek profit. That not only adds to the heavy financial burden for patients but also threatens patients' health, says the Minister.

The Minister notes that medical staff involving themselves in advertisements for illegal companies has also added to corruption and crime in the medical industry.

To solve this difficult problem, Gao Qiang says firstly that the Ministry will pursue every avenue to uncover illegality. Secondly, no matter who is involved in medical bribery, an exhaustive investigation will be conducted. Thirdly, staff of medical institutions who violate regulations will be seriously punished. Finally, all relevant departments concerned in audit, security and medical surveillance should work together to curb bribery.

Reports say bribery is a severe problem in the medical industry. Last year, China dealt with some 500 cases, involving up to 150 million yuan, or about 18 million US dollars. Some insiders have stated that bribery has not only undermined the professional morality of medical staff, but also contributed to the current high price of medicine.

(Source: CRIENGLISH.com)

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