

Elective surgery requires better control

Strengthening supervision key to promoting healthy, safe growth of booming sector

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Authorities have tightened supervision of the medical cosmetology industry and will use trans-departmental mechanisms to regulate its development, and protect the rights of consumers.

Eleven central departments including the State Administration for Market Regulation, the National Health Commission and the ministries of public security and commerce and the General Administration of Customs released a guideline requiring counterpart authorities to tighten supervision of the medical cosmetology industry last month.

The goal of the guideline is to maintain order in the market, protect health and safety, and encourage development of the sector.

It calls for authorities to adopt a problem-oriented approach, and to treat both the symptoms and the root causes of issues facing the industry according to the law, as well as to coordinate with each other.

It also tasked authorities with optimizing management of the medical cosmetology market, strengthening supervision both during and after treatment, deepening cross-departmental supervision, and adapting the regulatory system to the sector's development, to ensure that its growth is healthy.

Prominent issues such as illegal medical practices, counterfeit products, misleading publicity and excessive pricing have come to light as a result of the sector's rapid development, and have seriously endangered the health and interests of consumers according to an anonymous official from the State Administration for Market Regulation.

Between September and February, the State Administration for Market Regulation and 10 other central departments ran a special operation to deal with the most prominent problems.

Illegal institutions and violators were punished, a number of typical cases were investigated, and multiple long-term mechanisms were created, which helped curb ambient disorder in the sector, according to the SAMR.

However, supervision still faces challenges, and the industry still experiences occasional periods of chaos. Therefore, further improvements to the cross-departmental supervision mechanism are needed to raise regulatory efficiency and maintain a sense of order during diagnosis and treatment, as well as in the market, to protect health and lives, the official said.

According to the document, market regulation departments should oversee the scope of business medical cosmetology applicants seek, and ensure applicants make a written commitment not to engage in prohibited projects before they are given approval to operate. These commitments will be published publicly via the National Enterprise Credit Information Publicity System.

Authorities are also to improve the qualification examination, and any medical cosmetology services related directly to medical activities, as well as institutions without



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the necessary health administration permits issued, are banned from providing further services.

To do so, health departments must refine the examination and approval standards and process, and control entry to the industry by new applicants. Details of every institution will be published after they have been licensed to practice by health departments.

In addition, market supervision departments and health administrations will share information regarding medical cosmetology institutions.

The documents tasks provincial departments with identifying concerns in their own medical cosmetology sector, and with placing matters such as diagnosis and treatment, marketing, drugs and medical devices on their list of regulatory priorities, and with updating that list regularly.

Health departments, other regulatory departments and judicial organs shall, in accordance with their respective duties, report risks uncovered in the sector, and estab-

lish a mechanism to better discover and handle them in order to properly and rapidly crack down on illegal behavior.

Unlicensed institutions, or those which employ staff without the necessary medical qualifications or abilities, may not engage in consultation, guidance or even use the internet to publish information about cosmetology, popular science or any other kind of professional information.

Illegal behavior such as making promises that do not conform to the law or to medical norms during consultation, commercial bribery or the shilling of drugs shall be severely punished.

Supervision of training is also to be tightened, and acts such as offering training to staff lacking medical qualifications, or promises to issue "professional" certificates will be strictly penalized.

The document requires that in addition to strengthening the supervision of the medical cosmetology industry an intensive crackdown on disorder within the sector is to be maintained in order to remove insti-

tutions, doctors, medicines and medical facilities that do not conform to the law, and mandates the introduction of regulations to prevent bad money from driving out good money, which will result in a fairer and more orderly market environment and healthy development, the unnamed official said.

Regulation undertaken by many departments already focuses on the medical cosmetology industry, which is a good thing, and legally registered and run institutions warmly welcome tightened supervision, said Qin Yong, general manager of Sichuan Zhongke Jingmei Hospital Investment.

"Thanks to a large population, the medical cosmetology sector, technological progress and market cultivation have greatly developed. Medical cosmetology itself is closely related to economic development," he said.

According to data from Qichacha, a leading platform that provides data and analytics on private and public companies, there are 97,800 medical cosmetology-related companies in China, among which

28,500 were registered in 2021, a 225.7 percent increase on the previous year.

Last year, a further 33,400 companies were registered. In the first quarter of this year, 9103 new companies were registered, up 33.5 percent year-on-year.

Strong demand lies behind this explosive growth. The number of Chinese users of medical cosmetology is expected to reach 23.54 million this year, according to data released by Soyoung, a medical aesthetics platform.

There are tens of thousands of registered medical cosmetology institutions in the country, and according to Qin, there are almost as many unregistered institutions in operation, as well.

He added that in the past, people did not view medical cosmetology as medical intervention, and excessive commercialization led to disorder in the sector.

The guidelines have made it explicit that medical cosmetology is medical intervention, which should help standardize the sector, he said.

Policy Digest

Farm machines mobilized as winter wheat ripening

With the wheat harvest in full swing, some 600,000 combine harvesters are expected to be in use this season, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said.

Around 75 million mu (5 million hectares) of winter wheat has already been harvested, accounting for more than 20 percent of winter wheat planted in the country, the ministry noted in an online statement, adding that agricultural authorities are working with transport and meteorological authorities and oil companies to guarantee the smooth movement and operation of harvesters.

Continuous rainfall has been affecting Huanghuai, a major wheat producing area between the Yellow River and the Huai River, since late May, just as winter wheat crops were beginning to ripen.

In some places, humidity has resulted in mildew and caused the wheat to sprout, and wet soil has made it difficult for harvesters to operate.

Affected areas have been speeding up harvests by dispatching more farm machines, draining farmland, extending the working hours for harvesters and running grain drying facilities at full capacity, the ministry said.

It added that it is instructing local authorities to take advantage of the intervals between rain to speed up harvesting.

Screening for cervical, breast cancer is enhanced

Some 180 million tests for cervical cancer and 100 million tests for breast cancer have been conducted free of charge since the launch of a national program to promote screening for the two cancers in 2009, according to an official at the National Health Commission.

Screening has taken place in 2,600 counties, districts and cities across the country, said Song Li, head of the commission's Department of Maternal and Child Health at a news conference on May 31.

A tertiary prevention strategy will be enacted to further lower the threat of cervical and breast cancer, according to Song, and the country will push ahead with inoculations against HPV, and implement health education campaigns to increase women's awareness of the importance of self care in preventing cervical and breast cancer.

More regions will be encouraged to provide early screening, and efforts will be made to improve the abilities of medical workers, especially at the grassroots level, so that more patients are diagnosed and treated at an early stage, and so recover as quickly as possible.

New national standards for civilian drones released

The State Administration for Market Regulation has issued mandatory national safety standards for civilian drones, which will take effect on June 1, 2024.

The standards will serve as a guide for developing, testing and using civilian drones, the administration said in a statement issued on Friday.

Civilian drones, which are used extensively in a number of fields, including agriculture, forestry and meteorology, are easily converted for use in unlicensed or illegal flights, posing a potential risk to national and public security, according to the administration.

It added that some products developed by a small number of companies are poorly designed, potentially posing a risk to lives and property.

WANG QINGYUN

Authorities join forces to iron out wrinkles in medical cosmetology

By YANG ZEKUN

Administrative and judicial authorities are intensifying the fight against illegal activities in the field of medical cosmetology to ensure the healthy development of the sector.

Last month, eleven central departments issued a guideline on strengthening supervision of medical cosmetology to regulate the sector's development and protect consumer rights, which grew out of the findings of a nationwide operation conducted between September and February.

As early as 2017, multi-department crackdowns were already being

undertaken to regulate the sector.

Between May 2017 and April 2018, seven central departments including the health department, public security and medical product administration carried out an operation targeting problems in the sector ranging from operations to the injection of substances such as sodium hyaluronate, collagen and botulinum toxin, as well as breaches of training and advertising. Some illegal medical devices, products and forms of plastic surgery were also targeted and suppressed.

Then between June 2021 and December 2021, eight central departments launched another nationwide

operation to crack down on illegal services and the illegal manufacture and sale of drugs and medical devices, and investigated advertising and internet promotional material that also contravened the law.

In one typical case, part of the most recent operation, police in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, found that suspects had bought freeze-dried powder, bottle caps, fake packaging materials, labels and instructions, and then had teams packing and producing counterfeit versions of well-known brands of Botulinum Toxin, a substance widely used in medical cosmetology. They also hired agents and arranged for sales through institu-

tions such as beauty salons. The police filed a case for investigation in September, and have since apprehended 20 suspects and seized over 500 bottles of counterfeit drugs and 1,000 examples of counterfeit packaging materials worth around 32 million yuan (\$4.5 million). The case is currently under further investigation.

The State Taxation Administration, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate have joined efforts for the first time to regulate the industry, according to a guideline issued last month.

Qin Yong, general manager of Sichuan Zhongke Jingmei Hospital Investment, said that as governance

of industry may include tax and criminal investigations, it was reasonable to include the three departments in the document.

The SPP and the SPC were already ruling on problems in the medical cosmetology industry before the guideline was issued. According to the SPP, procuratorates approved the arrest of 306 people for alleged criminal offenses, officially charged 381 and filed 838 public interest litigation cases between September and the end of March.

Procuratorates have also issued 465 procuratorial suggestions to administrative authorities since then to push forward the resolution of

prominent issues affecting the public's rights and interests, the SPP said.

One typical case of consumer rights protection issued by the SPC on March 15 clarified that the Law on the Protection of Consumers' Rights and Interests can be applied to cases of medical cosmetology infringement.

In late April, the State Administration for Market Regulation issued a sample text for a Medical Cosmetology Consumer Service Contract to standardize the practice. It urged institutions to regulate marketing behavior and not create "appearance anxiety" through publicity materials.

The sample text reminds consumers of the complexity and uncertainty of medical cosmetology and encourages them to have balanced expectations for its effects.