

Medical Hub

The Third National Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on Medical Hub¹ which in this context covers specifically the medical services;

Notes that Thailand is a leading medical hub in Asia, accommodating more than 1 million foreign patients each year, and being medical hub generates the country revenue and reputation;

Aware that the State shall promote, support and develop the health system; promote the thorough and effective access to healthcare services; encourage the private sector and communities to participate in health development and the service provision as stated in Section 80 (2) of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2550 (2007); nevertheless, the State should act in accordance to Section 51 of the National Health System Statute by not rendering support or special tax or investment privileges to public health services which are business interest oriented but supporting the humanized public health service system;

Aware that health resources are limited and the number of human resources for health especially medical doctors and nurses is inadequate with geographically unequal distribution, most trainings of medical doctors and health personnel are carried out by the public sector with financial support from the national revenue tax thus these health personnel are oblique to provide health services to the Thai people;

Aware that being medical hub may encourage reverse brain drain of Thai medical doctors working in other countries, at the same time, being medical hub coupled with the existing health service system influence the brain drain of medical doctors from the public sector particularly medical schools to the private sector and consequently affects the health service provision, health personnel training, and workload in the public sector;

Concerning the balance of economic development, opportunity to develop the country along the trend of globalization, and impacts of medical hub, i.e., while Thailand being a medical hub which generates revenue and reputation to the country, with the limitation of human resources for health being medical hub may affect the access to high quality healthcare services among the Thai people;

Aware that public-private partnership is important for implementing the medical hub policies, with an ultimate goal of Thai people having good health and quality of life, that while enhancing the economic development not affecting the access to healthcare services of the Thai people;

Hereby issues the following resolutions:

1. The National Health Commission is urged to propose the Resolution of the Third National Health Assembly on Medical Hub Policy to the Cabinet to approve and assign the following agencies to take actions:

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1.1 Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Education, related public and private agencies and people's sector to provide related information to the Committee to Support the Study and Monitoring of International Trade Negotiations Affecting Health and Health Policies to support research studies on (1) positive and negative impacts of Thailand being a medical hub and (2) feasibility in implementation the fiscal measures to prevent and mitigate negative impacts of medical hub and promote the private sector's contribution by returning their profit to the society;

1.2 The Board of Investment to comply with the provision of Section 51 of the National Health System Statute by not rendering support or special tax or investment privileges to public health services which are business interest oriented;

1.3 Ministry of Public Health, by the Department of Health Service Support which is the main responsible agency for the second Strategic Plan to Promote Thailand as the Medical Hub, in collaboration with all related agencies and the Prime Minister's Special Committee focusing on promoting Thailand as the medical hub in health services to implement the medical hub policies or strategies that are not affecting the health service system provided to the Thai people and develop a mechanism for collaboration between the people, private sector and related agencies to develop such medical hub policies, both the national plan and action plan, in order to lessen negative impacts on the development of the health service system to the Thai people.

1.4 The National Committee on Human Resources for Health, as the main mechanism, together with Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Education and related agencies as well as the private sectors to take the following actions:

1.4.1 Collaborating with the Committee to Support the Study and Monitoring of International Trade Negotiations Affecting Health and Health Policies to develop the appropriate human resources for health production and management plan to substitute the loss caused by medical hub;

1.4.2 Supporting development of the information system and facilitating the access to essential information in order to monitor the movement of human resources for health influenced by the medical hub;

1.4.3 Developing explicit policies for effective resource sharing to alleviate the shortage of human resources for health caused by the medical hub by:

(1) Setting up the public-private partnership on resource sharing for postgraduate training of human resources for health especially in the shortage fields;

(2) Supporting and creating the sharing of knowledge and experience between the public and private sectors particularly on personnel management and hospital operation and apply these lessons learned for improving the better healthcare service system for the Thai people;

2. The Secretary-General of the National Health Commission is requested to present a progress report on this matter to the 5thNational Health Assembly.