

Glossary

Anti-epidemic Station (AES): A health facility at county level responsible for the main disease prevention and control activities undertaken within a county. They are responsible for supervising the preventive services provided by township health centres and village health stations.

county: The administrative unit below province and prefecture level. County population sizes vary between 100,000 and 400,000 people.

county hospital: Each county has a county general hospital, which provides outpatient and inpatient services. They are generally better staffed and better equipped than township health centres, from which they receive referrals.

local government: There are five levels of government in China: central government, province, prefecture, county and township. Governments at the provincial level and below are generally referred to as 'local governments'. Village committees are not formally a level of government.

MCH Centre: A county level health facility responsible for the provision of maternal and child health care (MCH) services within a county. They provide some services themselves and are responsible for supervising the provision of MCH services by township and village level facilities.

MoPH: Ministry of Public Health of the People's Republic of China. Recently it has been referred to as the Ministry of Health (MoH).

rural doctor: Village level para-professional health workers are either rural doctors or health aides. Rural doctors have passed a basic examination, while health aides have not. These categories have superseded the title 'barefoot doctor', which is no longer in use.

three-tier network: China's rural health system is modelled on a three-tiered network, consisting of village health stations, township health centres and county hospitals and county preventive facilities.

township: The lowest level of official government, below the county level. The average township has a population of 19,000 people.

township health centre: Township health centres function as a first referral hospital, providing a link between village health workers and county level health institutions. They generally provide outpatient services and supervise preventive services within a township. Some also provide limited inpatient services.

village: Each administrative village contains several natural villages, or between 1,000-2,000 people. Villages may own collective enterprises which are run by an elected village committee. The committee is also responsible for community welfare activities and may levy minor fees.

Rural Cooperative Medical Schemes (RCMS): A community-based pre-payment scheme which entitles members to reimbursement of a portion of medical expenses at local health care facilities. Types of treatment covered and levels of reimbursement vary between localities. (Also known as Cooperative Medical System, or CMS.)