

Chinese Vice-Minister of Health Discusses TCM

Editorial Staff

Chinese Vice Minister of Health Dr. Guoqian Wang and a six-person delegation arrived in the U.S. on June 6 to embark on a four-day visit that included San Francisco, Los Angeles and Washington D.C. The purpose of the trip was to meet with local Oriental medicine groups and practitioners, exchange ideas and inspect the development of Chinese medicine and integrated medicine in the United States.

In addition to visiting the campus of UCLA Center for East-West Medicine, Dr. Wang attended a banquet organized by Dr. Yun Liu, the vice-president of World Federation of Acupuncture-Moxibustion Societies (WFAS); the publisher of *China Medical Herald* (U.S.), Yancui Li; California Alliance of Acupuncture Medicine (CAAM) honorary chairman Dr. Jing-Xin Li; and Dr. Yusan Han, treasurer of Council of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Association (CAOMA).

Dr. Wang explained that traditional Chinese medicine development is an universal affair and has been practiced for 5,000 years. TCM has been molded/shaped and improved by people in everyday life. TCM treats disease without using medication and injections, healing internal discomforts by applying treatments externally. The main focus is disease prevention by understanding the theory of keeping in good health. TCM also has the unique, superior way of treating common and chronic diseases. As an example, Wang pointed out during last year's world-wide flu epidemic, China had a relatively low contraction rate, as well as death rate. One of the reasons is TCM was used as a defensive mechanism and an effective healing method.

Wang said that it has been a long-term policy for the Chinese government to view TCM and Western medicines as having equal importance. Among China's five key health system reforms, TCM is the main focus. The government also established a series of policies to assist in the development of TCM in all parts of China.

Wang explained, "Right now, the Chinese government is facing a difficult task with medical reform. It has to withstand the financial burden to guarantee the health of 13 million Chinese for a mere 1,000 yuan per person. The affordability for both the government and the people is tricky. So we need to deepen organizational restructuring and promote health care reform to lower medical costs. This is one of the reasons why the Chinese government values TCM."

Lastly, Wang emphasized the development of TCM as a worldwide effort and that its curative effect should be the core of all medical treatments. "Keeping with tradition doesn't mean backwardness, but rather strengthening Chinese and U.S. cooperation for TCM treatment is the key. The U.S. needs to understand that TCM is effective and affordable. We should work together for the development of TCM, and conduct joint studies, working together to bring its benefits to mankind. The road ahead of us is bumpy but there is a bright future for TCM in the U.S."

