



U.S.-CHINA TRACK II DIALOGUE ON HEALTHCARE

CONSENSUS AGREEMENT

July 20-22, 2022
Zoom meeting

The National Committee on U.S.-China Relations and the National School of Development at Peking University convened the seventh Track II Dialogue on Healthcare virtually through Zoom on July 20 and 22, 2022. The dialogue brought together American and Chinese experts (attendee list below) from academia, think tanks, and industry for off-the-record discussions on healthcare issues pertaining to both countries.

This iteration of the Healthcare Dialogue, held in the third year of the global COVID-19 pandemic, took place during a period when China and the United States are pursuing very different paths to deal with the virus. This, along with the frosty relations between the two countries, is severely limiting the ability of Chinese and American healthcare experts to work together to deal with the pandemic and other global health issues. Recognizing this situation, the participants focused on joint efforts to address COVID-19 as well as future pandemics, ways to develop more adaptable, innovative, and sustainable healthcare systems; and steps to improve healthcare innovation and regulatory harmonization.

KEY FINDINGS

Breakdown in Bilateral Communications and Trust. Dialogue participants noted that, in years past, China and the United States worked together on major global health issues. However, these efforts have mostly ceased with the spread of COVID-19 and increasingly fraught relations between the two nations. Both governments have restricted the exchange of data and research based on data security and more broadly national security concerns, with often vague definitions of the terms.

As doctors and scientists, participants know the importance of sharing information. The ability to conduct joint studies and collaborate at every level is essential for promoting innovation in healthcare and improving health outcomes. Lack of collaboration has real-world consequences, and the global struggle to contain COVID-19 is emblematic of that terrible cost.

COVID-19 and the Risk of Future Pandemics. Although the world has made enormous strides in containing the COVID-19 pandemic, the virus continues to spread and to spawn new variants, some of which are far more transmissible than earlier ones and might be vaccine-resistant. Efforts to cooperate globally on virus containment and treatment have been limited by nationalistic interests, highly varied policies, and mistrust of vaccines. The United States and China are no exceptions to this trend.

Over the past year, the two nations have taken starkly different approaches to the pandemic. China has continued its zero COVID policy while the United States has relaxed most COVID-related restrictions while at the same time encouraging vaccinations nationally. China's efforts have resulted in very few cases of COVID, but have affected the economy and have had a significant impact on people's lives. In contrast, the United States initially experienced a severe impact on the economy and much higher numbers of cases of COVID and COVID-related deaths. Americans are now trying to resume normal life, but the nation sees new cases and hospitalizations increasing, and there has not been equitable access to vaccines, vaccination, and treatment testing. This situation leaves both countries in a vulnerable position, particularly in terms of dealing with future strains.

The United States and China can better deal with the current pandemic, and prepare for future ones, if they work together. Experts in the two nations should be allowed to share their experiences and learnings. Chinese and American scientists should collaborate to develop combinations of vaccines and antivirals to combat COVID more effectively and deal with its long-term impacts. Greater research is also needed to address related issues, such as vaccine hesitancy, adverse reactions, and concerns related to long COVID, which can best be managed through joint studies by experts from both countries.

Improving Healthcare Systems and Delivery. Besides the COVID pandemic, both nations face similar health-related issues such as aging populations and increasing incidences of non-communicable diseases. However, both countries have difficulty addressing these issues due to fragmented payment and care delivery models which impede their ability to allocate resources in a more coordinated and efficient manner.

Given the magnitude of healthcare issues, China and the United States need to consider where they can apply resources most effectively and efficiently. Both countries recognize the importance of strengthening population health management strategies; integrating primary and public health care; and improving both nations' ability to address health-related social needs. China is focusing on One Health, an effort to go beyond traditional healthcare systems and consider other social determinants of good health. Participants also noted that the United States should invest in preventative services to prevent downstream, costlier treatments. For example, a small number of modifiable factors account for much of the population attributable risk for heart disease, cancer, and osteoporosis. Where screening and treatment provide great value in mitigating these factors, they should be free, accessible, and incentivized.

Many steps can be taken to help achieve these outcomes, such as effective integrated chronic disease management, establishing adequate person-centered evaluations, promoting good data governance—including rules governing data privacy and data flows—and encouraging home-based treatment and greater use of technology, such as artificial intelligence, virtual healthcare, and similar advanced technologies.

Both countries are already making great progress across these areas. However, these efforts could accelerate by sharing non-sensitive information based on mutually agreed protocols and through joint research and collaboration among the two countries' health scientists and healthcare professionals and other key stakeholders.

Healthcare Innovation and Regulatory Harmonization. Innovation is key to achieving better health outcomes. To encourage more innovation, it is important that countries provide strong protection to intellectual property (IP) rights, while simultaneously allowing for the mutual recognition of patents by regulatory authorities that reflect international best practices and sharing of IP among researchers and companies developing new pharmaceuticals and healthcare treatments. It is also important that parties can rely on data generated in clinical trials and other studies. To do so, both nations must work

to establish and implement mutually accepted standards that are aligned with internationally harmonized guidelines and good clinical practices. Dialogue participants noted that China has recently acceded to the ICH (International Council for Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use) and hope that this will encourage greater collaboration between our two nations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As the world's two largest economies, it is essential that the United States and China work together to deal with global issues such as healthcare. Scientific collaboration between qualified experts represents one way to develop solutions. Given the current state of distrust between our two governments, rebuilding ties in the healthcare field will take time and will best be done in stages. Steps that should be taken include the following:

1. **Work on new COVID treatments.** China and the United States should invest in early detection of both new infections and emerging variants and jointly develop new vaccines and antivirals to further control and contain the virus both domestically and internationally. Both nations must address the spread of the disease and new variants, through both bilateral and multilateral venues, to help restore economic and health security.
2. **Provide guidance on acceptable areas of cooperation.** Scientists cannot work together if government rules are not clear. Today, both governments use “national security” as the basis for prohibiting all kinds of exchange without any specific mention of the national security interest at risk. To help encourage collaboration, the two governments should clarify what constitutes national security interests and ensure that the use of national security concerns to restrict joint research is evidence-based. For example, all population data that are currently publicly available and needed for health research should be open and free for use by all medical and healthcare professionals and experts without fear of reprisal and clear guidance should be established to make restricted data with large potential to benefit the general public accessible to scientific research and medical treatment. In addition, to help facilitate the development of pharmaceuticals, the United States should clarify the delisting criteria for public corporations in the healthcare field and provide guidance and research on audit standards.
3. **Encourage data sharing while respecting IP rights.** Both nations should allow for greater cooperation between their respective experts on clinical trials and provide clarity so that data from clinical trials in one country can be utilized and accepted in the other country to help further the flow of good diagnostics and medicine between the two countries and around the world. Such data sharing can also be conducted under the auspices of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Moreover, recognizing that IP is critical to promoting innovation, both nations need to take measures to ensure that researchers can share IP with their colleagues and partner corporations while fully enforcing their ownership rights.
4. **Increase ties between healthcare agencies.** In light of China's accession to the ICH, the two nations should re-establish relations between the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the China National Medical Products Administration, including sending representatives from each to work in the other country to help improve regulatory science and promote efficient and effective global regulation.

5. **Re-authorize the ability of experts to travel, work, and study in the other country.** A decade ago, it was common for Chinese and American healthcare professionals to meet with their counterparts and work in each other's countries. Both governments should encourage such programs to restart, granting visas for the other's nationals to come into their borders to collaborate. In addition, it is important to provide greater assurance for the protection and safety of experts from one country visiting or working in the other country. No scientist or doctor should be inhibited from working with colleagues from the other country. Healthcare experts need clarity on what is and is not permitted within existing regulatory and legal practices and norms.

A healthy planet and healthy populations are in the interest of both China and the United States, as well as the entire world. However, in the current situation, developing mutual trust will take time. As a start, both nations should re-establish collaboration in specific areas that can bring about concrete results. The Dialogue participants will continue to work together to suggest projects that can help in this process.

CHINESE PARTICIPANTS

CHEN Wen	Professor, Health Economics and Director of Center for Pharmaco-economics Evaluation and Research, Fudan University
CHEN Xi	Associate Professor, Health Policy and Economics, Yale University
DAI Hancheng	Assistant Professor and Chair, Department of Environmental Management, College of Environmental Sciences and Engineering, Peking University (PKU)
FENG Zijian	Secretary-General, Chinese Preventive Medicine Association
GAO Fu	Director-General, Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention; Vice President, National Natural Science Foundation of China (Head of the China team)
HUO Yong	Professor of Medicine, Chief Physician, Department of Cardiology, Peking University First Hospital; President, World Association of Chinese Cardiologists
LEI Xiaoyan	PKU BOYA Distinguished Professor, National School of Development; Ministry of Education Yangtze River Scholar Professor of Economics; Director, PKU Center for Healthy Aging and Development Studies
Gordon G. LIU	PKU BOYA Distinguished Professor, National School of Development; Dean, PKU Institute for Global Health and Development (Co-Organizer of the Dialogue)
QIN Xuezheng	Professor and Deputy Dean, School of Economics at Peking University (PKU); Deputy Dean, PKU Institute for Global Health and Development; Director, PKU Research Center for Market Economy
SHAO Xiaojun	Chief Medical Officer, Taikang Pension Insurance Co. Ltd.; Innovative Expert, Thousand Talents Program; Guest Research Fellow, China National Health Development & Research Center, Chinese Ministry of Health
WANG Tao	Chairman, Chronic Disease Management Committee, China Aging Well Association; Professor, Department of Nephrology, Peking University Third Hospital
XU Ming	Research Professor & Chair, Department of Global Health, Peking University
YE Gang	Chief Clinical Expert, Simcere Pharmaceutical Group, Shanghai, China
YU Xuefeng	Co-Founder, Chairman and CEO, CanSino Biologics Inc.
ZHA Daojiong	Professor, School of International Studies and Institute of South-South Cooperation and Development, Peking University
ZHANG Ligang	Chairman and CEO, iKang Healthcare Group, Inc.
ZHENG Zhi-Jie	K.C. Wong Chair Professor, Associate Dean, Institute for Global Health and Development; Chair, Department of Global Health, School of Public Health, Peking University

AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS

Lawrence D. Brown	Professor, Health Policy and Management, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University
Lawton Robert Burns	James Joo-Jin Kim Professor, Professor of Healthcare Management, Professor of Management, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania
Christopher Colwell	Executive Director, Asia-Pacific, China and Japan Policy, Merck & Co.
Molly J. Coye	Executive-in-Residence, AVIA Health Innovation
Carlos del Rio	Executive Associate Dean, Emory School of Medicine & Grady Health System; Distinguished Professor, Department of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases, Emory University School of Medicine
Harlan M. Krumholz	Harold H. Hines, Jr. Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology and Public Health, Yale School of Medicine
Mark B. McClellan	Director and Robert J. Margolis, M.D., Professor of Business, Medicine and Health Policy, Margolis Center for Health Policy, Duke University (Head of the U.S. team)
Paul Neureiter	Executive Director, International Government Affairs, Amgen
Stephen Orlins	President, National Committee on U.S.-China Relations (Co-Organizer of the Dialogue)
David Rind	Chief Medical Officer, Institute for Clinical and Economic Review
Winnie Yip	Professor of the Practice of International Health Policy and Economics, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Harvard University