

Peking Union Medical College Hospital is celebrating the 100th anniversary of its founding and its legacy of openness and international cooperation, while pledging to carry this spirit forward in the coming years.

"Our duty is to provide the public with the most benevolent and loving care alongside top medical acumen," hospital president Zhang Shuyang says.

"It's an honor to witness the hospital's 100th anniversary. And each of us should make our own efforts to advance China's healthcare."

PUMCH, which is one of China's most prestigious medical institutions, celebrated its centenary on Sept 16. Its founding featured about 280 international health experts participating in a week-long academic exchange.

One hundred days before the anniversary celebration, the hospital signed a memorandum of understanding with the China Medical Board that is headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to expand academic collaborations in such areas as faculty development, residency training and enhancement of the China Nursing Consortium of Elite Teaching Hospitals.

"The signing is significant," Zhang says.

"The hospital and the CMB have a shared history. This cooperation is the extension of the friendship between the two sides and will actively promote communication between China and the United States."

Zhang said at the signing ceremony, "The CMB has always been our strongest friend and collaborator throughout the hospital's history."

CMB president Barbara Stoll says, "Even with their bold vision for the future, the founders of our respective institutions couldn't have predicted the enormous changes over the past century or imagined that PUMCH of today — ranked No 1 in China — would be a shining light for medicine throughout the world."

China's National Health Commission has designed PUMCH as one of the national referral centers, offering diagnostic and therapeutic care for complex and rare disorders; a national demonstration base for higher medical education and standardized residency training; and a core national center for clinical research and technological innovation.

For 11 consecutive years, PUMCH has topped the China hospital rankings released by Fudan University's Hospital Management Institute.

Combating pandemic

The COVID-19 outbreak tested all of the humanity and especially medical workers, particularly in the early days.

PUMCH's doctors, nurses and other staffers have proved their expertise through their actions at the front lines in China and abroad.

Last year, three medical teams from PUMCH arrived in Wuhan, the hardest-hit city, on Jan 26, Feb 7 and Feb 19, respectively.

They were responsible for the patients in the most critical condition.

Du Bin, who was then the intensive care unit's director and is the hospital's current vice-president, joined the first six-member team — the nation's top expert team dealing with COVID-19.



A century of healthy internationalism

Peking Union Medical College Hospital is reflecting on its 100-year history and aiming to advance global healthcare in future, **Du Juan** reports.



“Since PUMCH's founding, it has been an internationalized place where people feel we can realize dreams on this big stage, as long as we're brave enough to dream.”

Zhang Shuyang, president, Peking Union Medical College Hospital

Top: A panoramic view of Peking Union Medical College Hospital, which recently celebrated the 100th anniversary of its founding.

Middle left: Some senior professors at the hospital pose for a photo after a meeting to commemorate its centenary on Sept 16.

Left: Staff members celebrate after singing a chorus for the hospital's 100th anniversary. PHOTOS BY ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

Despite the shortage of personal protection equipment at that time, Du and his colleagues spent hours at patients' bedsides, giving examinations, discussing treatment plans and performing such procedures as tracheal intubation.

He was the team's only critical care physician and contributed to drafting a treatment manual based on their experience of treating a large number of patients in Wuhan.

Du and his team attended two news conferences hosted by the State Council to provide firsthand information about the pandemic and treatments to the world.

He told one of the news conferences that it was their responsibility to join the rescue team when local healthcare resources had been overwhelmed by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Du says he'd never related his work to sacrifice or contribution



because curing patients is simply a doctor's duty.

"Chinese doctors were the world's first medical workers to deal with COVID-19 patients, which of course means that Chinese doctors had a bigger say in international conferences on the

disease," he says.

"Many international conferences invited Chinese doctors to talk about COVID-19, and we shared all we knew about it, which has helped the world draw a general picture and framework."

Du says their duties extended

beyond helping patients to sharing their precious experience with the international medical community.

PUMCH doctors shared their COVID-19 experiences with over 10 countries through roughly 20 video conferences during that period, the hospital says.

Other smaller exchanges between Chinese doctors and overseas peers were more frequent.

The hospital's department of infectious diseases' deputy director, Cao Wei, participated in several video conferences with peers abroad. She says it was an opportunity for Chinese doctors to contribute to the world.

"We shared and learned to reduce casualties globally. Discussions about the cure continue. All in all, we need to respect science," she says.

Joseph Kolars, senior associate dean of the University of Michigan Medical School in the US, says the world is a better place for all the discoveries and care that PUMCH has been providing for a century.

"Peking Union Medical College Hospital will be leading us all forward to take on the important health challenges that still confront us," he says.

International exchanges

PUMCH says it's committed to delivering comprehensive state-of-the-art clinical care, innovative scientific research and rigorous medical education.

Premier Li Keqiang inspected the hospital a few days before its centenary celebration, saying that it is important to step up international exchanges and cooperation to keep exploring new techniques in clinical diagnoses, treatments and pharmaceuticals.

The hospital vows to continue to promote and develop international cooperation with medical institutions around the world.

PUMCH's international cooperation office director He Jing says the hospital has been encouraging international communication and training to build a two-way talent channel.

"We've been actively introducing international talent into China and sending our staff overseas for communications and training," she says.

"Many programs have been moved online due to COVID. But we've never suspended our connections with the world."

The hospital has sponsored over 460 talented young Chinese professionals to study abroad since 2009, He says.

A program was set up in 2019 to send department directors overseas to learn from the advanced management experience in leading universities and hospitals, such as Harvard University, the University of Chicago and Mayo Clinic.

The hospital has expanded its partnerships with more international institutions, including Cleveland Clinic, Johns Hopkins, Beth Israel Lahey Health, Circle Health and the University of Tokyo Hospital.

"We also export our expertise to help underdeveloped countries, such as those in Africa," He says.

"Our doctors travel to these places to perform operations and train local doctors."

Zhang, the hospital's president, says, "Since PUMCH's founding, it has been an internationalized place where people feel we can realize dreams on this big stage, as long as we're brave enough to dream."

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Nursing development to help patients through higher education

By **DU JUAN**

Peking Union Medical College Hospital has continued to shape the country's nursing in many ways, especially through elite education, since it founded China's first college-level nursing program a century ago.

PUMCH's nursing department director Guo Na enrolled in the medical college in 1991, studied there for five years and has worked in the hospital since graduation.

"I didn't hesitate at all to apply for the nursing degree," the 47-year-old recalls.

"Some people didn't understand why a nurse should get a college degree. I told them a well-educated nurse could better help

patients. We gained a deeper understanding of patients and their needs through study."

The college enrolled 30 students in the medical school in 1991, including 15 in the nursing program, she recalls.

"Every year, our dean brought the freshmen to the home of Nie Yuchan, who served as our nursing school's president between 1940 and '53," Guo recalls.

"She was more than 80 years old when I visited. But she cleaned and tidied up her room for our visit without any help. This elegant and strong-minded woman's stories have inspired a sense of honor in my occupation."

Guo says the profession of nurse developed much later than that of physician in China.



Guo Na, director of Peking Union Medical College Hospital's nursing department. PHOTOS BY ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

PUMCH's nursing school enrolled its first students in 1920 with the help of the Rockefeller Foundation, China's first nursing program of higher learning.

The Rockefeller Foundation and China Medical Board aimed high from the start and aspired to build the best medical school with a teaching hospital and a nursing school that would become not only the best in China but also on par with the top European and US institutions.

"PUMCH and the nursing school have made substantial contributions to making nursing a respectable and decent profession for educated Chinese, which was a challenging undertaking at that time," Guo says.

In 2011, the State Council made nursing a first-level discipline, acknowledging its significance in healthcare.

"For instance, our hospital recently had an elderly patient

who had bone and heart diseases, and a skin problem on her hip. Under such circumstances, it's crucial to decide which problem should be dealt with first. The clinical nurse specialists played important roles in making decisions with doctors since they knew a lot about the patient," she says.

"We tried two methods to address her skin issue. She's getting better now and is ready for follow-up treatments."

She says the hospital believes doctors and nurses serve equally important roles.

Guo is very busy as she works as the head of the 2,005-member nursing team, not only managing daily operations but also improving clinical nursing quality and

nurses' career development.

"The hospital values talent very much," she says.

"Before the COVID-19 pandemic, we sent dozens of nurses to the United States and Europe for further studies every year. Up to a fifth of our nurses have specialty nursing qualifications and 4 percent of the total are post-graduates."

The hospital also helps cultivate nurses from other Chinese hospitals by offering annual programs under central government guidance.

"It's our duty to provide faster, warmer and more professional nursing service to more patients," Guo says.

"And I'm very proud to be a part of this."