

**CHINA'S LONG-TERM CARE STRATEGY
FOR THE ELDERLY**

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Executive Summary

1. China faces huge challenges posed by accelerated population ageing and weakening family support for the elderly. To deal with these challenges, China has made great efforts to bring back the tradition of filial piety. More importantly, it has adopted national strategies to strengthen its social security system and establish a social care system for the elderly.
2. China has basically established a universal social security for the elderly, including basic healthcare insurance. The government has also set specific targets for expanding basic pension and providing minimum livelihood protection.
3. It will establish a universal basic pension system in urban areas by 2012 and in rural areas by 2020. It will provide minimum livelihood protection to all the elderly who are below the local poverty line by 2015.
4. China has also moved to establish a social care service system for the elderly, not only as a timely response to the ageing and care crisis, but also as an effective means to increase consumption and create new employment opportunities.
5. Since 2006, the government has focused on establishing affordable and convenient home-based and community-based care services for the elderly to enable them to live on their own with minimal dependence. The government has recently attached more importance to institutional care as well.
6. China's national strategy proposed for the 12th Five-Year Programme (FYP 2011-2015) is to establish a social care service system "with home-based care as the foundation, backed up by community-based services and supported by institutional care".

7. China intends to add more than three million new institution-based beds to accommodate 3% of China's old population by 2015. It has also planned to establish a comprehensive service network to support home-based care in all the urban communities, 80% of the rural townships and half of the rural villages by 2015. None of the goals is easy to achieve within five years.
8. China currently can only provide institution-based beds for 1.8% of the elderly. A complete community-based service system has not yet been established to support home-based care, even in the urban areas.
9. China's social care system for the elderly is still in its infancy. Rural areas especially are lacking in social care facilities. The disabled rural elderly and those left behind are particularly vulnerable.
10. To achieve the national targets set by the 12th FYP, the government needs to train a large number of qualified care workers, increase financial support for social care facilities, find effective ways to attract private capital in the care industry, and play a larger role in regulating and monitoring social care provision to the elderly.