AIDS Becomes China’s Top Deadly Infection

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A recent governmental epidemic report reveals that AIDS has been named the top killer among infectious diseases in China for 2008, Xinhua News Agency reports.

AIDS claimed 6,897 lives from January through September of 2008 in that country, according to the article. Tuberculosis and rabies ranked second while hepatitis and infant’s tetanus came in third.

China’s ministry of health confirmed 264,302 HIV accumulated cases by the end of September. Of those cases, 34,864 have died. The number of HIV cases has nearly doubled from the 135,630 HIV cases reported in September 2005.

Before the health ministry’s latest report, the government launched a nationwide policy in 2003 called “four frees, one care,” a program for all people living with HIV/AIDS. The four frees are: free testing; free counseling and treatment for HIV-positive people in rural regions; free medication for all HIV-positive pregnant women and free education for AIDS orphans. The “care” calls for increased attention to impoverished HIV-positive people and efforts to eliminate HIV stigma.

According to the article, the report also said the health authorities included hand-foot-and-mouth disease into the country’s epidemic prevention and control endeavor in May last year.

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