China Prepares to End HIV Travel Ban

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China is ready to lift its decades-old ban on HIV-positive foreigners, the country's State Council announced April 19 according to Xinhua News Agency. China currently bars people living with mental disorders or infectious diseases—such as leprosy and HIV—from entering the country.

While the council did not disclose when the ban would be lifted, a formal announcement of the policy shift is expected before the opening of the Shanghai Expo on May 1. Rules regarding long-term residence and immigration of HIV-positive people will be clearly defined in the future.

"The ban imposed in the 1980s due to a lack of knowledge is obsolete and discriminatory," said He Xiong, deputy director of the Beijing center for disease prevention and control. "As HIV/AIDS cases have been seen in all provinces in China, a travel ban on foreigners will not help local public health."

According to the article, China remains one of 60 countries still enforcing HIV travel bans.

More than 740,000 people in China are HIV positive.

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