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China pledge more financial assistance to AIDS patients

By Ng Che Yean

BEIJING: China has pledged to provide more financial aid to AIDS patients in conjunction with World AIDS Day which falls on Thursday.

The State Council would provide areas with high HIV/AIDS prevalence, special medical aid to help ease heavy financial burdens of patients, caused by anti-AIDS treatment, Xinhua News Agency quoted Chinese Premier Wen

Jiabao as saying.

Some AIDS drugs would be included in the country's essential medicine system, which meant drug prices are under control and the cost could be covered by basic health insurance, Wen said during a discussion with a group of people representing HIV carriers and AIDS patients, doctors and AIDS researchers on the World AIDS Day.

The premier also promised that the

government would increase financial aid to families impoverished by AIDS, including raising allowance and providing subsidized housing to shelter homeless HIV/AIDS victims.

The actual number of people living with HIV/AIDS in China is expected to hit 780,000 by end 2011, with 48,000 new infections and 28,000 deaths this year, according to the Ministry of Health.

About 88,000 people have died

from the disease since 1985, when the first case was found in the country.

The government is also working on measures to help children orphaned by AIDS, to ensure basic standard of living, equal education opportunities and accessible medical treatment, he added.

Wen said it was necessary to amend laws and regulations that have the nature of discrimination against HIV/AIDS victims. - Bernama