

# Analysis of the dilemma of public health committee construction and optimization path

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**Abstract :** Establishing public health committees within the village (neighborhood) committees is an explicit provision of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and an inevitable requirement to promote the implementation of the Health China strategy and ensure people's health. In practice, fragmentation, lagging and blurring of relevant legislation, differences in regional construction, barriers to information flow, omissions in emergency response mechanisms, scarcity of cross-disciplinary talents, and lack of personnel training in the rule of law are the primary legal regulation dilemmas in the construction and operation of public health committees. Given this, based on building a systematic, complete, and normative system, we should form a coordinated and highly efficient working mechanism and develop a comprehensive work team that equips with talents with both medical and legal knowledge.

## 1. Presentation of the problem

The construction of the public health system is related to the orderly promotion of Healthy China strategy and the guarantee of fundamental human rights. The prevention and control of the new crown pneumonia epidemic profoundly confirm that the grassroots level in urban and rural areas is the focus of public health system construction. As a mass public health organization at the grassroots level in urban and rural areas, the public health committee is the critical grasp of grassroots public health governance. Promoting the modernization of grassroots governance and the comprehensive promotion of rural revitalization is of great significance. The Constitution of the People's Republic of China clearly stipulates the establishment of public health committees in village (residential) committees. By the end of 2022, provinces such as Anhui and Beijing have basically achieved full coverage of public health committees and drawn up local experiences in concrete practice. However, other existing laws and regulations have not yet made specific provisions for the construction of public health committees, which leads to problems such as arbitrary staffing, incomplete setting of responsibilities, and lack of operational mechanisms in the completed public health committees. It is urgent to strictly regulate the construction of public health committees through legislative means and improve the rule of law in grassroots governance.

In recent years in China, especially with the introduction of the Guidance on Strengthening the Construction of Public Health Committees in Village (Resident) Committees (hereafter referred to as the Guidance), issues related to the construction of public health committees have attracted extensive attention from the academic

community. Generally speaking, domestic scholars' research has focused on two aspects. Firstly, the problems of public health committee construction. According to Song Daping, the top-level design of the structure of public health committees in China needs to be further clarified, the work coordination mechanism needs to be established and improved, and the guarantee mechanism lacks operability. Secondly, the suggestions for optimizing the construction of the public health committee. Xu Ting believes that laws and regulations should clearly define the nature of public health committees and their relationship with village committees, clarify the operation mechanism, implement financial security, etc. Cao Yanlin believes that it is more important to improve the system and mechanism for managing public health committees in addition to legal and policy improvements.

This paper believes that the inclusion of public health committee regulations in the revision or enactment of laws and regulations not only improves the operational mechanism and work efficiency of the already established committees but also provides legal guidance and clarifies the construction path for future committees. Therefore, by discussing the current situation of public health committee construction in China and analyzing the jurisprudential problems, we want to clarify the dilemma of public health committee construction and propose the optimization path.

## 2. Analysis of Public Health Commission Jurisprudence

The report of the 20th National Congress points out that it is necessary to put the protection of people's health in a

strategic position of priority development. Since the outbreak of Covid-19, although China's grassroots public health governance has played an important role, some shortcomings still restrict the further improvement of public health governance capacity. The improvement of the system related to the public health committee will not only optimize the governance structure and promote the modernization of China's public health governance system and governance capacity. Still, it will also further implement essential national strategies such as Health China and Rural Revitalization. In the following article, we will make a jurisprudential analysis of the construction of public health committees regarding overview and functionality.

## 2.1 Overview of the Public Health Committee

### 2.1.1 Concept of Public Health Committee

Paragraph 2 of Article 111 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China stipulates: "Residents' committees and villagers' committees shall establish committees for people's mediation, public security, and public health, to handle public affairs and public welfare undertakings in the area where they reside, mediate civil disputes, assist in maintaining public order, and reflect the opinions, demands, and suggestions of the masses to the people's government." It can be seen that the public health committee is a grassroots mass public health organization set up within the village (resident) committee and receives the work guidance of the higher-level government and the higher-level health and family planning department.

### 2.1.2 Characteristics of the Public Health Committee

As one of the internal committees of the grassroots mass self-governance organizations, the public health committee has the following characteristics.

First, grassroots. Hierarchically, the public health committee is rooted in the grassroots, and its work focuses on the general health of the grassroots in urban and rural areas. It handles public health affairs in its jurisdictions, and the primary staff are urban residents and rural villagers at the grassroots level.

Second, mass. Regarding personnel structure, the director of the public health committee is a cadre of the village (residence) committee who is in charge of health and family planning work, and there are also several part-time staff. Regarding personnel election, the members of village (resident) committees are elected by the villagers (residents) who have the right to vote. Therefore, the membership of the Public Health Commission comes from the masses and is elected by the people, not determined by the government.

Third, autonomy. Under the grassroots mass self-governance system, villagers and residents handle matters related to public health on their own through the villagers' committees and residents' committees. Although public health committees also assist the government in carrying out essential public health services, their status is still that of internal bodies of grassroots mass self-governance organizations.

Fourth, hygienic. The public health committee is responsible for organizing and mobilizing public health work in its jurisdiction. Besides, it is their duty to assist the government or other dispatched organs in carrying out essential public health services, collect and report information on hygiene and health violations, and maintain public environmental sanitation.

## 2.2 The legal sources of the Public Health Commission

The Public Health Commission is a link in the grassroots mass autonomous organizations system. Its legal sources include the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, laws, regulations, and local government rules.

### 2.2.1 Constitution

Established according to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, constructing public health committees is a requirement nowadays. The constitutional status of grassroots mass self-governance organizations is clarified by the relevant provisions of Article 111 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, which provides a top-level design for the construction. Before Covid-19, public health committees were piloted in some areas. After Covid-19, the functions of public health committees in health emergency response, coordination and mobilization, and service provision have been addressed and emphasized.

### 2.2.2 Laws

At present, China has built up an effective public health legal system. The Law of the People's Republic of China on Basic Medical Care and Health Promotion, the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases, the Emergency Response Law of the People's Republic of China, the Animal Epidemic Prevention Law of the People's Republic of China, and the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Quarantine of Animals and Plants Entering and Leaving China to provide essential legal compliance for China's public health management and service work.

Concerning the construction of grassroots public health committees,

Article 7 of the Organic Law of the Villagers' Committees of the People's Republic of China stipulates that "villagers' committees shall set up committees for people's mediation, public security, public health, and family planning according to their needs. Members of the villagers' committees may also be members of subordinate committees. It is unnecessary to construct subordinate committees in villages with small populations. Members of the villagers' committees shall divide the work of people's mediation, public security, public health, and family planning." The Organic Law of the People's Republic of China on Urban Residents' Committees contains similar provisions. The law mentioned above regulates the nature, status, and duties of the Public Health Commission.

### 2.2.3 Regulations

Concerning the legal construction of public health committees, the State Council has the right to enact administrative regulations, and provincial people's congresses and their standing committees have the right to enact local rules under the law. For example, Article 40 of the Regulations on Emergency Response to Public Health Emergencies, promulgated by the State Council in 2011, clearly stipulates that village (residential) committees should organize forces, unite and collaborate, prevent and treat the masses, and assist the competent health administrative departments and other relevant departments in implementing the work.

In addition, the provincial people's congresses and their standing committees have also enacted local regulations related to the field of public health. For example, the People's Congress of Guangdong Province and its Standing Committee formulated the "Guangdong emergency public health emergency measures" (hereafter referred to as "Measures"). Article 7 of the Measures stipulates that township people's governments and street offices shall do an excellent job in the area of emergency prevention and emergency response according to the needs of higher-level people's governments. Residents committees, villagers' committees and social groups, organs, enterprises, and institutions, should do an excellent job of the unit's emergency prevention work based on the command of the local people's government. Both central and local regulations support the construction of public health committees and effectively promote the legalization of the public health field.

## 2.3 The functions of the Public Health Committee

Public health committees' functions are reflected in their impact on human behavior and social relations, according to the primary responsibilities and behavior of the public health committee. The normative functions are divided into the following four categories: monitoring function, guiding function, education function, and evaluation function. The social functions are included in the following three: maintaining social order, assisting social management, and promoting the achievement of value goals. Meanwhile, the normative function and social function are unified in the safeguard function. The effective performance of the safeguard function of the Public Health Commission is conducive to promoting the development of public health and meeting the growing health needs of the people.

### 2.3.1 The normative function

After analyzing the current situation of the construction of public health committees in areas where full coverage has been achieved, this paper believes that the standardized functions should include the following four aspects: first, the monitoring function. The public health committee is responsible for assisting the government in carrying out population health literacy surveys, chronic disease surveys, nutritional surveys, and other work, providing primary data for population monitoring for various public health work. Second, the guiding function. The public

health committee can formulate village (community) public health work programs and emergency plans for public health emergencies, organize and mobilize public health activities in the district, and organize emergency drills for public health emergencies. Third, the education function. In order to improve the health literacy of the public and maintain public environmental health, the public health committee can regularly organize grassroots groups, economic and social organizations, and units in the district to carry out public education activities and mass patriotic campaigns from the dimension of hygiene. Fourth, the supervision function. The public health committee regularly organizes the village (residents) in the area to evaluate the general health work in the region, conducts democratic supervision of government departments' sanitation and health work, and reflects the public needs on health and suggestions to the relevant departments.

### 2.3.2 The social function

The social function of the public health committee means it can achieve specific social purposes and tasks. From the perspective of the purpose and nature of public health committees, the social functions include the following three main aspects: First, maintaining social order. According to the "Guiding Opinions" jointly issued by four departments, public health committees should organize and mobilize social organizations, social charity resources and social workers, and community volunteers to prevent and control epidemics in case of public health emergencies. Second, assisting social management. The "Guiding Opinions" clearly states that the public health committee is a subcommittee of the village (neighborhood) people's committee, working under the unified leadership of the village (community) party organization and the village (neighborhood) people's committee. It is their duty to establish and improve the coordination and linkage working mechanism with village (community) health service institutions and assist in providing health services to Vulnerable groups such as the elderly, minors, people with disabilities, and family members in difficulty in the community.

### 2.3.3 The safeguard function

Based on the normative and social functions of the public health committee, the public health committee, as a grassroots organization between the higher authorities and the people, can play a role in safeguarding the people's health and public safety. On the one hand, the public health committee should implement the "people-centered" development concept, which means performing duties with the law, effectively playing its regulatory and social functions, reflecting the interests and aspirations of the people, protecting the rights, and safeguarding the people's life and health safety. On the other hand, in the context of the continuous improvement of our laws and the gradual increase in the awareness of the rule of law among the nation, the public health committee is a powerful grip to guarantee the rule of law for health and promote the development of the health China strategy forward. Not only does the realization of the rule of law for health depend on the actual implementation of the

public health committee, but the level of construction of the law for health is also closely related to the effectiveness of the work of the committees.

### **3. The current situation and dilemma of public health committee construction**

#### **3.1 The status of the establishment**

##### *3.1.1. Organizational structure*

The village (neighborhood) committee is important for epidemic prevention and control, an essential channel for information transmission, and an important link connecting the public and the government. Based on its importance, China vigorously promotes the construction of the public health committee. According to the Guidelines, the composition and division of responsibilities of the public health committee shall be clarified within 30 days after the completion of the transfer of work by the village (neighborhood) committee resulting from the general election; its director shall generally be a member of the village (neighborhood) committee or the deputy director of the village (neighborhood) committee; its deputy director may be a staff member of the village (community) health service institution. In the construction process, the public health committee widely absorbed the township health centers, village health offices, workers of community elderly service institutions within the medical institutions, health instructors, family health workers, and retired medical staff as its members.

##### *3.1.2 Job responsibilities*

The fundamental responsibility of the Public Health Committee is to organize residents to do an excellent job in village (neighborhood) environmental protection and assist in providing health services. Its responsibilities include: developing village (neighborhood) public health work programs and emergency plans, organizing emergency drills; fostering and guiding community social organizations in the field of public health, especially voluntary service organizations; assisting in the provision of basic public health services under the support and guidance of the health department, carrying out infectious diseases and major epidemics prevention and control disposal, comprehensive improvement, health cleanup. The government's provision of relatively macroscopic responsibilities for public health committees and the design of a universal construction framework will further promote the progress of the grassroots social governance system.

##### *3.1.3 Operation mechanism*

Under the guidance of the township (street) and the leadership of the village (community) party organizations, China has continued to promote the construction of public health committees with full coverage, strengthen the public health committee mechanism, team and capacity building, improve the standardization of work, systematization, socialization, and the coordination of public health services. Guided by the provincial health

department, the public health committee will assist in providing basic public health services, preventing and controlling infectious diseases and significant epidemics, carrying out comprehensive improvement, do some cleanup work after the establishment. At the same time, special training for members of public health committees and cadres of community volunteers should be organized regularly to enhance their professional competence, ability to do mass work, and self-protection. From the specific practice of China, their jobs include but are not limited to the following ways: sending medical care to the home, warmth to the house, prevention, and help to the home.

#### **3.2 The construction dilemma**

##### *3.2.1. The national legislation needs to be improved*

###### *3.2.1.1 The fragmentation of legislation*

In national legislation, when the relevant provisions of the same issue are scattered in several laws and regulations, it is easy to induce legislative conflicts and legislative duplication, which will lead to the waste of legislative resources. The fragmentation of legislation related to the construction of public health committees will hinder realizing the goal of systematization and scientific nation of legislation. There are several laws related to the structure of public health committees. The Constitution of the People's Republic of China provides for establishing public health committees as a matter of course; the Organic Law of the Village (Resident) Committees provides for establishing public health committees on a need-to-know basis. These two laws express the necessity of establishing public health committees differently. However, on the one hand, the Constitution of the People's Republic of China occupies an absolute position in China's legal system; on the other hand, the "Guiding Opinions" clearly put forward the requirement of "striving to achieve full coverage of the public health committee mechanism within two years," which proves the urgency and necessity of the construction of public health committees. Therefore, the expressions in the Organic Law of the Village (Resident) Committees should be adjusted, and the issue of public health committee construction should be centrally regulated when the existing laws are revised or new laws are enacted in the future to avoid legislative conflicts and misunderstandings in the application of laws in various regions.

###### *3.2.1.2 The lag of legislation*

The Outline for the Implementation of Government Building by Law (2021-2025), the National Strategic Plan for Rural Revitalization (2018-2022), and the Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Comprehensively Promoting Rural Revitalization and Accelerating Agricultural and Rural Modernization respectively emphasize the importance of legislation in the field of public health and the construction of a healthy countryside. The area of public health in China has shown a new development of

the rule of law in governance. As a critical link in grassroots public health governance, timely legal regulation of the construction of public health committees is the top priority in establishing a sound public health system in China. However, the relevant sectoral legislation in China still lags behind the practice development. The Law of the People's Republic of China on Emergency Response only provides for the duties of village (residential) committees. It is easy to see that some elements overlap with the primary responsibilities of the public health committee as described in the Guidance, such as the dissemination of emergency response knowledge, emergency response drills, and the organization and mobilization of the place where the emergency occurs. At the same time, the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases provides for the organization and mobilization of activities for the prevention and control of infectious diseases concerning the duties of village (residential) committees, which is also consistent with the formulation of the duties of public health committees in the Guidance. Whether or not the subject of responsibility in the relevant law is refined to the public health committee is related to the issue of high-level legal guidance and the formulation of particular laws and regulations for the construction of public health committees in the future.

### 3.2.1.3 The ambiguity of legislation

China's existing laws and regulations only provide that the public health committee is a committee under the village (neighborhood) people's committee and has not made detailed provisions on its rights and obligations, operation mechanism, legal responsibilities, and other key issues yet. The Guiding Opinions also only make general provisions in principle on their organizational structure, essential duties, and operational mechanisms. Due to the ambiguity of the national-level norms, there is also a trend of ambiguity in the local practice of public health committee construction. The provincial health committees of many places in China, such as Anhui, Guangdong, and Shandong, have issued a notice "comprehensively promote the work of public health committees under village (residential) committees" in 2021. However, we can know the regulations are unclear in some regions by analyzing them. First, Guangdong Province and Shandong Province provide for the organizational structure of public health committees under the leadership of the Party organization and guidance from the government and departments, while Anhui Province does not specify the organizational structure of public health committees; second, Anhui Province and Shandong Province provide for the number of public health committee members to be 3-7, while Guangdong Province does not specify the number of public health committee members; third, Guangdong Province and Shandong Province have more detailed regulations on the duties of public health committees, while Anhui Province has only macroscopic regulations on the responsibilities of public health committees. The vague regulations of the higher authorities will directly lead to the formalization and

arbitrariness of grassroots construction practices, the injustice and unreasonableness of grassroots law enforcement, and the inefficiency and high cost of grassroots organizations, which will, in turn, harm the rights and interests of grassroots people and endanger their trust in the government.

### 3.2.2 The coordination mechanism needs to be improved

#### 3.2.2.1 Differences in regional construction

Since the release of the Guiding Opinions, most provinces in China have achieved full coverage of public health commissions. However, regarding specific practices, the unbalanced development of the east, middle, and west regions has led to differences in the construction of public health committees. First, there are differences in the budgets and resource allocation of public health commissions in different regions. Data from the Ministry of Civil Affairs show that more than 90% of village committees have already established public health committees. In other words, some villages still have been unable to build public health committees so far. Second, the organizational structure of public health committees varies from region to region. In some remote villages affected by policies and economics, construction is not only challenging to reach the level of large cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangdong. Still, it is even unable to meet basic needs. In addition, the staffing of public health committees may have differences too. The complexities of "mega-cities" with extremely high turnover require public health committees to equip with a higher caliber of staff. However, when high-caliber personnel is concentrated in large cities, there are bound to be serious gaps in other regions. Finally, regional differences in characteristics and disease prevalence will lead to differences in the focus of public health committees in different regions. Therefore, we should allocate resources scientifically to meet the differentiated needs of public health committees in different regions.

#### 3.2.2.2 Barriers to Information Circulation

Under the current trend of cooperation and a win-win situation, information barriers and data silos still exist. Problems include poor information flow and ineffective information construction among public health departments. Departments use different information systems, adopt diverse data management methods, and lack uniform information security management standards, all of which can lead to an increased risk of information leakage and subsequent violation of the legal rights of people. In addition, the lack of data sharing between different departments inevitably increases the difficulty of data analysis, leading to a lag in detecting disease evolution trends and the inability to provide data support for medical management and decision-making. Information barriers between these departments can lead to duplicate entries or to miss medical data, wasting resources and inefficiencies. For example, during the outbreak of Covid-19, the implementation of the National Health Code was hampered by differences in the timing of its launch and the lack of a unified mechanism at the national level. Only by breaking down the barriers of

multiple codes that are not commonly used can government agencies better serve people's health.

#### 3.2.2.3 Omission of the emergency mechanism

Although the Public Health Committee has played an indispensable role in practice, there are still omissions in its emergency response mechanism. Emergency management is related to synergy between administrative departments, enterprises, and institutions, where the Public Health Committee's coordination and organizational capacity still need improvement. Notably, the emergency plans developed by the Public Health Committee sometimes lack detail. In the face of brand new infectious diseases, not only are the existing plans unable to cope with them, but they are also negligent in adjusting or updating. More importantly, it is essential to strengthening the public health committee's ability to disseminate information.

#### 3.2.3 *The quality of personnel needs to be improved*

##### 3.2.3.1 Scarcity of cross-disciplinary talents

Because the public health field is diverse and complex, public health committees need a pool of interdisciplinary talent. The professional backgrounds of public board practitioners are mainly in fields such as medicine or biohealth, so they lack the professional background and mindset to cross-fertilize with other disciplines, resulting in limitations in their analytical perspectives. The lack of work experience and systematic training of scholars and professionals working in public health has prevented them from gaining a deeper understanding of grassroots health issues, lacking practical experience in dealing with real-world problems, and making it difficult for them to possess professional knowledge, functional ability, and interdisciplinary skills at the same time. In addition, the management model of the public health committee is single-tier and lacks the ability to manage interdisciplinary issues and coordinate matters among professionals. All of the above talent factors limit the orderly development of public health committees.

##### 3.2.3.2 Lack of the personnel rule of law training

Although higher education in public health has gained popularity in the country, there are still gaps in education and training in health policy, public health laws, and regulations. The members of public health committees occupy an essential position in society, requiring them to have a higher level of professionalism. Sufficient legal knowledge and rich social experience are necessary to ensure the smooth operation of the committee's work. However, most of the public health committee members lack education in the rule of law. The value of law lies in its effective implementation. Still, the lack of professional training for law enforcement officers will seriously hinder realizing the value of laws and regulations in public health.

## 4. Optimal pathway for the construction of the public health committee

### 4.1 Building a systematic and complete system of institutional norms

#### 4.1.1 *With the Constitution of the People's Republic of China as a root*

The institutional design at the constitutional level is the fundamental basis and support for establishing the public health committee. Article 110 of China's Constitution stipulates that the village (neighborhood) committee shall have a committee for people's reconciliation, public security, and public health, which shall be responsible for conducting public affairs and public welfare, mediating civil disputes, assisting in the maintenance of social security, and conveying the opinions, demands, and suggestions of the public to the people's government. In terms of the setting of the institution, establishing the public health committee under the village (neighborhood) committee is one of the constitutional requirements. The establishment of the public health committee is at the same level as the people's mediation and public security committee but has different functions. The provisions of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China provide the fundamental basis for establishing the public health committee. In terms of institutional roles, the fulfillment of public duties in society is the constitutional design of the functions of the public health committee, which should be responsible for handling public affairs and public welfare, reflecting the opinions and requests of the public to the people's government and making recommendations, etc. The provisions of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China are the fundamental guide to the effectiveness of the public health committee. Laws of other levels than the Constitution should take the provisions of the Constitution as their virtual guide and make more detailed provisions for establishing the public health committee under the provisions of the Constitution.

#### 4.1.2 *Take laws and administrative regulations as the main part*

Although the Constitution of the People's Republic of China provides a top-level design for establishing the public health committee, there are currently no supporting laws or administrative regulations to make further arrangements for this. The specific system of the public health committee is scattered in various policies and opinions, and there is a clear tendency for fragmentation. Besides, there are no laws or administrative regulations to provide systematic, scientific, and complete rules for them. In this regard, the process of relevant legislation should be accelerated to improve the institutional framework of the public health committee to meet the development needs of the public health committee. Specifically, laws and administrative regulations should make specific institutional arrangements for the public health committee in the following aspects: the character of the public health committee and its relationship with the village (neighborhood) committee; the composition of the public health committee; the specific functions of the

public health committee; the working mechanisms of the public health committee (daily mechanisms and mechanisms in case of emergency); the training mechanisms for staff; and guarantees for the operation of the public health committee; operational guarantees of the public health committee, etc.

#### *4.1.3 Take local regulations as the subsidiary part*

After the law or administrative regulations have made more systematic and complete arrangements for the establishment of the public health committee, Local People's Congresses and administrative organs with legislative power can make institutional arrangements on the premise of complying with the provisions of the Constitution, laws and administrative regulations, that are appropriate to local conditions and under local circumstances so that the effectiveness of the public health committee can be more fully and effectively exercised. Before enacting local laws, the competent authorities should conduct timely research and investigation into the conditions and development of the local primary public health committee and conduct scientific analysis before formulating specific norms. At the same time, the competent authorities should also widely consult the community through hearings, seminars, and demonstration meetings during the legislative process to strengthen the relevant system's public opinion base. Grassroots, the public health committee, may also take the initiative to report the specific local conditions, including the advantages or shortcomings of building the public health committee, to the relevant authorities, who will collate and submit them to the competent authorities for discussion and deliberation, to serve as the basis for deciding on specific norms.

## **4.2 Forming a coordinated, interacted, and efficient working mechanism**

### *4.2.1. Improving the governance structure*

From the vertical perspective, the public health committee should work under the village (neighborhood) committee's and local party organization's unified leadership. The public health committee should be responsible for handling general daily work by itself. In the case of significant cases, they should first be referred to the village (neighborhood) committee for collective discussion and decision and then to a specific committee for implementation. From the horizontal perspective, the public health committee should establish a working mechanism of mutual coordination with other committees at the same level and with the village (community) health services. Specifically, if matters that fall within the scope of other committees' functions are encountered in the course of dealing with public health matters, they should be referred to the relevant committee; if the process of dealing with public health matters requires the assistance of medical professionals, the public health committee should communicate and coordinate with the health service agencies to complete the relevant work together.

### *4.2.2 Promoting information sharing*

The level of development of the public health committees varies from region to region, and so does the information of experience gained in the construction process. In this regard, an information-sharing mechanism should be established, and a comprehensive information-sharing platform should be built so that regions with a higher level of construction and better results can integrate valuable experiences and information to share with other regions, thus promoting the better development of public councils as a whole. At the same time, a bidirectional information sharing and circulation mechanism should also be established within the region. On the one hand, people can use the public health committees as a communication medium to submit their views and requests on health work to the relevant authorities. At the same time, major health information collected by the grassroots public health committees during their work should be shared with the government health authorities so that they can take relevant measures according to the specific situation. On the other hand, relevant information released by health authorities or health service providers can also be communicated to the public through the medium of public health committees.

### *4.2.3 Insisting peacetime and wartime combination*

The public health committee should establish a "combination of peacetime and wartime" mechanisms to enhance its capacity to respond to major risks in the health sector. Specifically, the public health committee should establish two sets of working mechanisms. The first is the daily working mechanism, according to which the public health committee should carry out its daily activities, organize health education, carry out the national health campaign, implement environmental hygiene cleaning, manage and supervise funeral practices, etc., to fulfill the essential functions of the public health committee. The second is the emergency work mechanism. The public health committee should set up an emergency work mechanism for public health emergencies so that it can respond quickly and operate efficiently when a risk event occurs and coordinate the efforts of all parties promptly, to effectively protect people's lives, health, and property.

## **4.3 Developing an integrated workforce that knows laws and medicine**

### *4.3.1. Strengthening the training of grassroots staff*

The public health committee comprises directors, deputy directors, and members. The director is usually a member of the village (neighborhood) committee or the deputy director of the village (neighborhood) committee; the deputy director may be a grassroots health service staff member. The members are drawn from a broader range of sources, including health instructors, family health workers, retired medical personnel, people in charge of various entities in the district (such as property service enterprises and social organizations), and enthusiastic residents. Although such a composition can broadly bring together all parties involved in health care, the lack of education of the staff concerned may affect the successful

implementation of health care work and lead to potential risks. Therefore, the training of relevant staff in health and legal knowledge should be strengthened. On the one hand, the medical literacy of the staff concerned should be improved so that they are better able to safeguard the lives and health of the people in their daily health work; on the other hand, the awareness of the legal risks of the staff concerned should be raised to reduce the possibility of them infringing on the legitimate rights and interests of citizens in the course of their work.

#### *4.3.2. The development of the public health committee's peripheral organizations*

The Public Health Council has a significant role to play. In order to better fulfill its role in public health, it should further strengthen its workforce. In addition to internal members, public health committees that are in a position to do so can also pool the efforts of all parties in the area and develop communities, social organizations, and public interest groups as peripheral organizations to support the public health committees in their health work and build the health cause, thereby integrating resources and forces and forming an internally and externally linked, organically coordinated community. It is important to note that the staff of the peripheral organisations involved in the implementation of public health matters must be confirmed to have the appropriate capacity to work in order to be responsible for the safety of the life, health, and property of the public. Those who do not have the necessary skills or are not sufficiently competent must attend training courses to ensure they have the necessary skills before participating in the work. Those already competent should also receive daily training to improve their competence further.

## **5. Conclusion**

As a branch of grassroots mass self-governance organizations in the health field, public health committees are an essential safeguard for people's health, especially their lives, and health in case of public health emergencies. However, because the construction of the relevant system and the implementation of specific work have only begun gradually in the last two years, some of the functions and realistic regulations of public health committees are superficial, and it is difficult for them to play their health protection role effectively. Based on the regulatory, social, and security functions of public health committees in the context of public health emergencies, this paper analyzes the current situation of public health committee construction, summarizes the current legal regulation dilemmas, and discusses countermeasures and suggestions from three latitudes: institutional system, working mechanism, and work team, but the understanding of some issues is not deep enough. For example, the realization of financial security for the operation of public health committees, the specific construction strategies of information-sharing mechanisms among public health committees in different regions, and the implementation of the introduction of talents at the grassroots level all need to be further studied

and determined to finally build a system of grassroots public health committees that is convenient for the people and efficient in operation.

## **Acknowledgements**

This work is supported by "the 2022 College Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Program" under the project " Analysis of the dilemma of the construction of grassroots public health committee and its solution path." Project number: S202210699502.

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