



A group of students receives the Illumina Public Health Education Scholarship during the ceremony conducted by the Chinese National Health Commission's International Health Exchange and Cooperation Center. Photo by Illumina

## China empowers the next generation of public health professionals

*Illumina awarded scholarships to more than 150 students at the Peking University Health Science Center*

AS THE WORLD'S second-largest economy and second-most populous nation, China is committed to advancing and deepening the development and reform of its public health system, which faces increasing challenges such as aging populations, chronic disease, environmental changes, and infectious disease outbreaks.

[Watch the video at youtube.com/watch?v=EhSrtEoDPC0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhSrtEoDPC0)

China believes in building a more sound public health system. That means prioritizing scientific research, improving clinical practice, and coordinating efforts across universities, institutions, and various enterprises. It also requires developing a talented public health workforce. To further this end, Illumina and the Chinese National Health Commission's International Health Exchange and Cooperation Center (IHECC) launched the Illumina Public Health Education Scholarship program.<sup>1</sup>

The scholarship program's award ceremony for the 2022–23 academic year was held on March 26, 2024, at Peking University Health Science Center. Since the

launch of the program in 2022, nearly 300 students from five universities have received scholarships.

This year, 153 outstanding individuals from five universities were selected as scholarship recipients, 39.9% of whom are undergraduates, 42.5% are postgrad students, and 17.6% are doctoral students. These students represent 19 specialties in public health, including preventive medicine, epidemiology and health statistics, public health, social medicine and public health management, labor health and environmental health, nutrition and health, health policies and management, public health emergency management, prevention and control of pathogens and infectious diseases, children's and adolescent health and maternal and child health care, health toxicology, medical information, global health, oncology, surgery, clinical medicine, and nursing.

Wang Jian, deputy director of IHECC, says: "Health matters not only to the quality of life of each individual but also to the country's prosperity and national rejuvenation. Cultivating talent in public health and innovative research, as well as developing the national

1. <https://www.illumina.com/company/news-center/feature-articles/china-public-health-scholarship.html>

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public health workforce, is critical to promoting the development of Healthy China. The launch of the scholarship program is also essential to supporting the development of national public health education. Going forward, we will continue to undertake comprehensive and multilevel health care collaborations with socially responsible nongovernmental organizations, enterprises, and individuals, and continue to support the development of public health education in China."

The scholarship recipients are actively engaged in innovative research, and are contributing novel and creative solutions for public health issues, which demonstrates how education can result in significant practical measures.

"Peking University Health Science Center is honored to host this award ceremony, which is a recognition of our past work as well as an expectation of our work in public health education in the future," says Xiao Yuan, a member of the scholarship's review committee and deputy director of the health science center. "This award will not only inspire these students to continue to adhere to the oath 'Health entrusted. Lives confided' in forging ahead on the road of medicine for the glory of the country, but it also clearly reminds us of our mission. We are determined to become a robust force in the promotion of public health practice and to expend continuous effort in the cultivation of national medical talents, the development of medical disciplines, the improvement of health services, and the progress of medical technology. The development of public health can't proceed without the strong support of national policies and the joint efforts of all sectors of society. Going forward, we hope we will all join hands to create a broader space for this development."

Wen Qiaorui, a doctoral student in Peking University Health Science Center's class of 2022 and a one of the scholarship recipients, says: "We're very grateful to IHECC and Illumina for their awards and their support for public health students. As new blood in China's public health agenda, we are aware that we have great responsibilities and much to contribute.... We will work hard, using our knowledge and skills to protect people's lives, undertaking our mission and responsibility to demonstrate the spirit of the era—the development of Healthy China."



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PHOTOS: ILLUMINA

Addressing the students at the award ceremony, Carol Xiaoqing Yang, chief representative of Give2Asia China Representative Office, said: “To support the continuous improvement and development of the medical system, our society needs public health professionals with expertise and compassion together with an understanding of what everyday life is like. I hope that you will continue to pursue your careers in the field of public health and come to an understanding of the range of public needs for primary health care.” She predicted that the award recipients will use their expertise to solve great problems and help develop a healthy future for China. She added that, as an international charity, Give2Asia will continue leveraging its resources and working with socially responsible multinational companies like Illumina to cultivate talent in public health.

Global public health and life sciences sectors have developed rapidly in recent years, and with its mission to “improve human health by unlocking the power of the genome,” Illumina is leading the life sciences toward broader prospects with cutting-edge gene sequencing technology that has consistently shown great potential for driving research and precision health.

Sharon Vidal, global lead of Corporate Social Responsibility at Illumina, says: “We are excited to share that for the past year, we have granted scholarships to a larger group of outstanding students. Our commitment extends to demonstrating the beneficial impact of genomics, not just through our business activities, but also through responsible operations, community contributions, and forward-thinking investments for the advancement of public health.”

Jenny Zheng, senior vice president and general manager of Greater China at Illumina, adds: “Public health bears the important responsibility of protecting people and promoting social harmony and stability. As a company with an exemplary sense of social responsibility, Illumina has always been concerned with the development of public health in China. We are committed to supporting the development of public health education and the cultivation of outstanding talent in that field in a range of forms, including the establishment of scholarship programs. Looking ahead, we will continue to work with the Chinese government, academia, medical institutions, and others to plan and implement more projects like these.” ♦