

Second Child

In the first eight months of this year, more than half of China's newborn babies were the second child in the family, according to a senior health official.

From January to August this year, about 52 percent of the 11.6 million babies born had an older sibling, said Wang Peian, Vice Minister of the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC), at a demography forum in Beijing on October 30.

Figures provided by the NHFPC showed that 18.5 million babies were born in hospital in 2016, the highest number since 2000 and 1.3 million more than in 2015. About 45 percent of them had an older sibling.

In response to the aging of its population, China has since 2016

removed all restrictions on second child.

Wang also said that even with an increased average age of expectant mothers, newborn and maternal mortality have fallen.

There will be changes to policies in tax, social security, housing, employment and other areas as well as more support for the new family planning policy, said Wang.

In 2016, China allocated 2.9 billion yuan (\$440 million) for construction of city- and prefecture-level maternity and pediatric hospitals.

By 2020, there will be around 89,000 new maternity beds in hospitals and 140,000 more obstetricians and midwives. More emergency centers for mother and child treatment will be set up across the country by the end of the year, according to a government plan.