

《上海将于三月启动单独二胎政策》

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Shanghai joins the club of loosening the one-child policy in China, allowing couples to have a second baby if either parent is an only child, xinmin.cn reported.

An amendment to the Shanghai Municipal Population and Family Planning Regulation was approved on Tuesday by Shanghai Municipal People's Congress, making the international financial hub the 7th region to update China's family planning policy, following Zhejiang, Jiangxi and Anhui provinces, as well as the municipalities of Tianjin and Beijing plus Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. The new policy will take effect on March 1.

According to the revised regulation, the two-child policy will cover not only rural residents, but also urban couples with a Shanghai hukou, or permanent residence permit. Shanghai's policy will be different from Beijing's new birth regulation, which started Friday.

Prospective two-child families in Shanghai are allowed to have children with no gaps. In Beijing, couples must wait until the mother turns 28 or until the first child is 4 years old to have a second one.

The Shanghai legislature's move is seen as part of the local authorities' efforts to raise the fertility rate and ease the financial burden of a rapidly aging population.

Shanghai has seen an alarming rise in the aging population. By the end of 2012, there were about 3.6 million residents 60 and older, accounting for 25.7% of the population. By the end of 2015, this percentage is expected to rise to 30%.

In 1979, Shanghai took the lead in fulfilling the one-child policy, which has reduced 7 million births since then in Shanghai, according to Xu Jianguang, director of the Shanghai Municipal Health and Family Planning Commission.

A recent poll shows that 75,000 to 150,000 additional babies will be born each year in Shanghai with the new policy in place.