

《Baidu promises to support family》

Baidu will fully support the family of a college student who died after he sought treatment at a hospital advertised on its online search engine, the information giant said.

"We will fully support the family of Wei Zexi ... if there is any misconduct by the hospital found during the investigation," according to Baidu Tuiguang, Baidu's pay-per-click management platform, in a statement on Sunday.

The company said it has sent its condolences to Wei's family.

Wei, a student at Xidian University in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, died earlier this month after treatment at the Second Hospital of the Beijing Armed Police Corps.

The hospital's Biological Treatment Center, where Wei received the therapy, was contracted to a private company owned by Putian (Chinese) Health Industry Association, according to a media report. It said the association has more than 8,500 members.

According to an internal letter made public on Sunday, Wang Zhan, a vice-president of Baidu, was fired on Friday for "violating professional ethics and jeopardizing the company's interest".

Wang was in charge of Baidu Tieba, which has been criticized for allowing unqualified private hospitals to advertise in an online forum. Baidu declined to comment.

Beijing-based Baidu has been scrutinized for its business model of auctioning off search keywords and then ranking results accordingly.

Earlier this month, Putian urged its members to stop advertising on Baidu, following Baidu's crackdown on what it said was false healthcare information in ads posted on its site. Prices for advertising on Baidu are increasing fast and are unfair, it said.

Baidu said in late March that it rejected ad requests last year from more than 7,800 hospitals affiliated with Putian.