The history of the health insurance system dates from 1922. The system was initially intended for employees of enterprises. After the war, in fact in 1961, it became a universal health insurance system that then covered everyone. The universal health insurance system has been maintained for over 50 years now and has become a system that we can boast of to the rest of the world.

Through use of an insurance card, people can choose which medical institutions they want to go to and receive medical care at fairly low cost. This environment that we typically take for granted is rather uncommon in other countries where the type of medical care people can receive can differ depending on their income, etc.

However, the issue of increasingly poor health insurance finances due to increased medical expenses has been pointed out. Ways to solve the issue of protecting the universal health insurance system in Japan, where a system that we can boast of to the rest of the world.

As described above, everyone is covered by some form of public insurance system and thus can receive necessary medical services at low cost by paying certain insurance premiums and co-payments (10% to 30%) at reception desks. In addition, “free access,” which means that everyone can receive medical services at any medical institution nationwide, is also a characteristic of the Japanese health insurance system. In the U.K., for example, registered family doctors are responsible for primary medical care and receiving medical examinations from specialized doctors typically takes much longer, which can be quite a major issue. That issue does not exist in Japan.

People’s health and lives are protected by the universal health insurance system that we casually benefit from. In order to protect the universal health insurance system, which Japan is so rightfully proud of, and ensuring the system, which enables anyone to receive medical care anywhere anytime, is available to future generations, the Health Insurance Bureau has been taking various measures every day.

Comparing the medical expenses of those with or at high risk of metabolic syndrome and those without metabolic syndrome revealed that the latter is approximately 80,000 yen less annually than the former. In addition, approximately 30% of those who received specific healthcare guidance no longer had or were no longer at risk of metabolic syndrome the following year. As described above, promoting measures to prevent lifestyle-related diseases can prevent the onset of serious illnesses and thus decrease medical expenses.

Increased use of generic drugs can contribute to reducing both the burden on patients and improve health insurance finances, and is therefore considered very important.

A generic drug is used to refer to a drug that can be manufactured at the same level of quality and efficacy as the original drug after its patent has expired. No development costs are involved and hence they can be sold at a lower price than the one conventionally used (brand-name drug) but with the same level of quality and efficacy.

Increased use of generic drugs can contribute to reducing both the burden on patients and improve health insurance finances, and is therefore considered very important.

Specific health checkups/healthcare guidance (so-called "metabolic syndrome health checkups") focusing on visceral fat accumulation (metabolic syndrome) commenced in fiscal 2008. Specific health checkups are available to those aged 40-74, with specific healthcare guidance being provided to those that do not meet standards concerning abdominal position, blood glucose, blood pressure, and lipids. You may have heard of this through advertisements in which people worry about the fat around their waists.

Providing advice to individual patients such as using medical fee points in evaluations of whether cheaper generic drugs can be used, and guiding medical services providers to switch from hospital beds, which are too large in number when compared to globally, to at-home care.

In order to protect the universal health insurance system, which Japan is so rightfully proud of, and ensuring the system, which enables anyone to receive medical care anywhere anytime, is available to future generations, the Health Insurance Bureau has been taking various measures every day.

Providing advice to individual patients such as using medical fee points in evaluations of whether cheaper generic drugs can be used, and guiding medical services providers to switch from hospital beds, which are too large in number when compared to globally, to at-home care.

Providing advice to individual patients such as using medical fee points in evaluations of whether cheaper generic drugs can be used, and guiding medical services providers to switch from hospital beds, which are too large in number when compared to globally, to at-home care.

Providing advice to individual patients such as using medical fee points in evaluations of whether cheaper generic drugs can be used, and guiding medical services providers to switch from hospital beds, which are too large in number when compared to globally, to at-home care.