Health Service Bureau

For people’s health

Mission

Similar to its world leading average life expectancy and healthy life expectancy, Japan maintains high health levels. However, lifestyle-related diseases such as cancer account for approximately 30% of medical expenses, or in excess of 30 trillion yen, and thus improving individual lifestyles and developing a social environment that support that are becoming important issues. In addition to conventional infectious diseases such as polio and measles, pandemic influenza spread throughout the world in 2009 and thus infectious diseases still remain serious threats in our lives. Enhanced support for and preventive measures against diseases such as intractable diseases and hepatitis are also strongly desired by patients. The provision of clean water supply systems and the maintenance/improvement of services that are essential in people’s daily lives, including barbers, beauty salons, and laundries, are also important.

In order to realize a society in which all people can have healthy, happy lives while being of support to each other, medical institutions and public organizations, in addition to administrative organizations, are expected to cooperate in supporting individual health promotion measures and developing environments that help protect people’s health.

Policy 1

Health promotion and cancer control measures

Lifestyle-related diseases such as cancer, heart diseases, stroke, and diabetes make each citizen taking measures to promote their own good health, including improving their lifestyles, and a social environment being developed that effectively promotes those measures very important. The Health Service Bureau has therefore been promoting new national health measures for extending people’s healthy life expectancy through “Health Japan 21 (2nd edition),” which has set 53 goals regarding nutrition/dietary habits and smoking cessation, etc. since fiscal 2013.

Cancer is a disease that half of population suffers from during their lifetime and of which 30% of them die. In order to “establish a society in which people can live with a sense of security even though they have cancer,” the Bureau is working in a focused manner, based on the new “Basic Plan to Promote Cancer Control Programs” that was decided by the Cabinet in June 2012, to improve cancer medical care that includes radiotherapy and chemotherapy, the promotion of cancer screening to ensure its early detection, the development of palliative care systems, support for balancing treatment with their work lives, and the adoption of childhood cancer control measures.

Policy 2

Measures against infectious diseases including vaccinations

Based on the latest scientific knowledge, taking measures against infectious diseases, including monitoring the situation with infections, quarantine inspections, and vaccinations in normal times is important. The issue of a “vaccine gap” has been pointed out with the prevention vaccination system in Japan, in particular, as it offers less public vaccinations than more advanced countries. In order to eliminate that “vaccine gap,” the Bureau has been working towards a comprehensive review of vaccination measures, including regular vaccination of three vaccines for Hemophilus influenza type b (Hib), pneumococous, and cervical cancer since the start of fiscal 2013. In addition to cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H7N9), having been confirmed in China in March 2013, highly pathogenic avian influenza has continued to occur throughout the rest of Southeast Asia.

Policy 3

Intractable disease measures, environmental health, water supply systems, etc.

Comprehensive measures, including the promotion of research on effective treatment methods, fair and stable subsidies for medical costs, dissemination and education, establishment of a consultation system regarding daily life and employment, and support for welfare services, are necessary for diseases of uncertain causes (intractable diseases) and for which effective treatments have yet to have been established. In order to realize a harmonious society in which people can continue to live with respect in their community even though they have an intractable disease, the Bureau is making adjustments for measures that include legislation with an aim of establishing comprehensive and stable intractable disease measures as early as possible.

The Bureau is making the effort to ensure the appropriate implementation and dissemination/education of and to secure donors for organ transplantations.

The Health Service Bureau is working to ensure good public health by making our lives more healthy and hygienic through health promotion, prevention and treatment of various diseases, improvement of environmental health, and the provision of safe water supply systems, etc.

Underground installation construction of water pipes for earthquake proofing

Smart Life Project

In order to extend not just possible “life expectancy” but also their so-called “healthy life expectancy” for helping to ensure more vital, healthy, and enjoyable lives, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has been taking measures since fiscal 2011 in cooperation with enterprises and organizations as part of the “Smart Life Project.”

The “Smart Life Project” consists of three concrete actions, namely “appropriate exercise,” “appropriate dietary habits,” and “smoking cessation,” and appeals to individuals, enterprises, and organizations to take concrete measures. The Bureau is also working on activities to raise awareness of health promotion and lifestyle-related diseases utilizing a “Let’s Extend Healthy Life Experincial Award,” which was created this year, for municipalities, organizations, and enterprises that are engaged in outstanding activities.

Green Ribbon Campaign 2012