

Overview of Basic Act on Measures against Hepatitis (Act. No.97 of the year 2009)

Preamble

Today, in Japan, there are a large number of patients infected by hepatitis virus or suffered from hepatitis which is the most major national infectious disease. Since hepatitis becomes chronic if left untreated and there is a great risk of developing more serious diseases such as cirrhosis and liver cancer, the sufferers have immeasurable anxiety about their future.

Postwar progress in medicine, accumulation of medical knowledge and the advance of science have paved the way for controlling hepatitis, however, there still have been many unsolved issues in early detection and accessibility of treatments. Moreover, not all the people have a proper understanding of hepatitis.

The hepatitis B and C virus infection occurred in the situation that the government was responsible for and that the root had not identified. The government has admitted its responsibility of the case in which particular blood coagulation factor products tainted by hepatitis C virus caused mass infection among the general public and the sufferers have been inflicted with a great damage, citing that the government failed in prevention of spreading the infection. Furthermore, the final juridical decision was made that the government was responsibility for the case of hepatitis B virus infection which occurred in the situation that one syringe was shared by several persons in the mass vaccination.

Under such circumstances, it is required that human rights of hepatitis virus infection sufferers and hepatitis patients be guaranteed and high-quality and appropriate treatments be provided without fail in to promote measures to overcome hepatitis.

We hereby establish this Act on measures against hepatitis so as to clarify the basic principles and to comprehensively promote them.

1. Basic Principles

- (1) To promote hepatitis research and to diffuse, utilize and develop the results.
- (2) To enable people in any region to take a hepatitis test.
- (3) To enable patients in any region to receive hepatitis care.
- (4) To carefully consider to protect hepatitis patients from discrimination where the principles (1)~(4) are implemented.

2. Responsibilities

To stipulate the responsibilities of the national government, local governments, medical insurers, citizens, physicians and other medical professionals

3. Basic measures against hepatitis

Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare is to establish basic measures against hepatitis for preventing it and promoting medical care for it in order to expedite the hepatitis measures comprehensively.

4. Basic measures taken by the national and local governments

Prevention

- To take necessary measures to promote hepatitis prevention such as enlightening and disseminating knowledge about hepatitis prevention.

Early detection

- To take necessary measures to improve the quality of the hepatitis test coupled with dissemination and enlightenment of the hepatitis test.

Treatments

- To train physicians and other medical professionals to acquire the expertise in hepatitis care.
- To establish and improve medical institutions which provide specialized hepatitis care.
- To take necessary measures to lighten the economic burden of hepatitis patients.
- To take necessary measures for hepatitis patients to secure the opportunity of receiving medical care and to improve quality of life during recuperation.

Research

- To take necessary measures to promote research on hepatitis and apply the results.
- To hurry clinical trials on pharmaceuticals for hepatitis care and improve the environment for smooth implementation of clinical research on hepatitis care.

5. Promotion Council for Measures against Hepatitis

Establish the Promotion Council for Measures against Hepatitis under Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare as an advisory institution on formulation and revision of the basic measures against hepatitis

6. Implementation of measures against cirrhosis and liver cancer

- To speed up clinical trials on pharmaceuticals and to create an environment to improve the treatment level.
- To consider the situation of medical care and to have more discussions if necessary on how to support cirrhosis and liver cancer patients who developed the disease from hepatitis.

7. Date of enforcement

This Act shall be enforced on January 1, 2010.