

Overview

Summary of the Law Regarding Infectious Disease Prevention and Medical Care for the Patients

(Approved on Sept. 28, 1998 and enforced on April 1, 1999)

Prior administrative measures against outbreak and spread of infectious diseases

- Development and establishment of the surveillance system for infectious diseases
- Promotion of comprehensive nationwide and prefectural measures
(To facilitate cooperation of related parties, basic guidelines to prevent infectious diseases are prepared and announced by the government, and the prevention plan by the prefectural governments)
- Preparation of guidelines to prevent specific infectious diseases including influenza, sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, and tuberculosis. (The government prepares and announces guidelines to investigate causes, prevent outbreak and spread, provide medical care services, promote research and development, and obtain international cooperation for the diseases that especially require comprehensive preventive measures)

Types of infectious diseases and medical care system

Type of infectious disease	Key measures	Medical care system	Medical fee payment
New infectious diseases	Hospitalization	Designated medical institutions for specific infectious disease (several in number nationwide designated by the government)	Publicly funded in full (no insurance applied)
Type 1 (Plague, Ebola hemorrhagic fever, South American haemorrhagic fever, etc.)		Designated medical institutions for Type 1 infectious disease [1 hospital in each prefecture designated by prefectural governors]	Medical insurance applied with public funds (for hospitalization)
Type 2 (Avian influenza (H5N1), tuberculosis, SARS, etc.)		Designated medical institutions for Type 2 infectious disease [1 hospital in each secondary medical area designated by prefectural governors]	
Type 3 (Cholera, O-157 infection, etc.)	Work restriction in certain jobs	General medical institutions	Medical insurance applied (partial cost sharing)
Type 4 (Avian influenza (excluding H5N1), West Nile fever, etc.)	Sterilization and other objective measures		
Type 5 (Influenza (excluding avian influenza and novel influenza infection, etc.), AIDS, viral hepatitis (excluding hepatitis E and hepatitis A), etc.)	Identifying the situation of infection and providing such information		
Novel influenza, etc.	Hospitalization	Designated medical institutions for specific/Type 1/Type 2 infectious disease	Medical insurance applied with public funds (for hospitalization)

* Infectious diseases other than Type 1, 2, or 3 infectious diseases requiring emergency measures are designated as "designated infectious diseases" in Cabinet Order and are treated the same as Type 1, 2, and 3 infectious diseases limited for 1 year in principle.

Development of hospitalization procedures respecting patients' human rights

- Work restriction and hospitalization according to the type of infectious disease
- Introduction of a system to recommend hospitalization based on patients' decisions
- Hospitalization up to 72 hours ordered by prefectural governors (directors of health centers)
- Hospitalization every 10 days (30 days for tuberculosis) with hearing opinions of the council for infectious disease examination in health centers
- Reporting complaints on conditions of hospitalization to prefectural governors
- Constitute special cases to make decisions within the 5 days against the request for trial examination of complaints from the patients who are in hospitalization for more than 30 days
- In the event of emergency, the government on its own responsibility shall provide necessary guidance to prefectural governments on hospitalization of patients

Development of measures such as sufficient sterilization to prevent infectious diseases from spreading

- Sterilization to prevent Type 1, 2, 3, and 4 infectious diseases and novel influenza from spreading
- Restricting entry to buildings to prevent Type 1 infectious diseases from spreading
- In the event of emergency, the government on its own responsibility shall provide necessary guidance to prefectural governments on sterilization and other measures