

OECD Health Ministerial  
“A conversation with Health Ministers”  
People at the Centre: OECD Policy Forum on the Future of Health

Speech by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan  
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Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Colleagues in Global Health, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the OECD, for inviting me to this forum.

With the fastest aging population in the world, Japan now faces the health care system challenges of sustaining good health outcomes at low costs. In order to ensure sustainability and prepare the health care system for current and future health care needs, we need comprehensive reform based on a forward-looking, long-term vision. This is why we launched a report called, “The Japan Vision, Health Care 2035” in June 2015.

One of the key messages that emerged from the report is the need to shift the focus from system inputs to patient value. Today, I would like to share three major health system reforms that we are undertaking to achieve the people-centered health care.

The first reform is to transform Japan’s health care delivery systems to maximise the value for patients. One of the key values for the elderly is to continue to live in their home communities under appropriate care. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide such continuous care in communities due to increasing healthcare needs under the ageing population especially in remote areas. Recently the only clinic ran by a physician in a remote village of 1200 residents in Ehime prefecture where I am from, was closed. As a result, the elderly in this village had to move to nursing homes and hospitals in urban areas. To save this community, a group of 6 doctors from Matsuyama, my hometown, the capitol city of our prefecture, stood up and started to go into the village on a daily rotational basis to provide outpatient care, and 24/7 home-based care. They developed and deployed their original cloud-based ICT solution to share patient information collectively among physicians and other staffs and ensure continuum of care for the patients. This model could be an example of how to address the physician shortage and continue to provide community-based integrated care in remote

areas, as it assures daily lives of the elderly in their community, as well as the family lives and professional career development of physicians. We will further leverage the potential of ICT including telemedicine, information sharing across providers in different areas and specialties to ensure continuous care of the patients.

The second reform is to incorporate genomic medicine further into clinical practice to provide personalised medicine to meet individual patients' needs. Genomic medicine is one of the keys to tackle the burden of cancer. In this context, I have just announced three weeks ago that we will launch a national plan to end cancer, and the establishment of a nation-wide consortium for a joint clinical data collection to facilitate genomic treatment by maximising effectiveness while minimising adverse effects. Big data analysis will also contribute to the development of new drugs and treatment. Our national plan is a global effort in collaboration with other countries, including trilateral cooperation among the United States, South Korea and Japan, and possibly beyond.

The third reform is the full-fledged introduction of data-driven health care. Japan is developing a world's first large-scale national health data platform integrating health check-ups, medical care, as well as long-term care data, including 10 billion health claims, to maximise the value for patients. This platform will facilitate the creation of new medicines and innovative health care technologies leveraging optimal clinical data linked with outcome. This will also empower people to fully utilise their own health data to make better informed health decisions, while minimising unnecessary tests and procedures. Furthermore, we are encouraging payers of health insurance to play a key role in urging health care providers to improve the medical quality and efficiency of medicine and motivating the insured to engage in disease prevention efforts.

Through these reforms, Japan will align its health system around patient value and integrate health care into social and community care frameworks. I am fully committed to these reforms and hope to learn from innovative ideas and lessons across the world to address our common health care challenges.

Thank you.