

Chapter 8

Promotion of Self-Sufficiency Support and Community Welfare for People with Disabilities

Section 1. Promotion of Measures to Support Self-Sufficient Community Lives for People with Disabilities

1. Summary of Welfare Measures for People with Disabilities

(1) Establishment of the “Services and Support for Persons with Disabilities Act”

In the area of health and welfare for people with disabilities, the “assistance benefit supply system”, in which beneficiaries can select services themselves and then use them on an agreement with service providers in equal status, was introduced in April 2003 to replace the conventional “measure-oriented system” in which the administrative authorities decided the types of services to be provided. In addition, the “Services and Support for Persons with Disabilities Act” was approved in October 2005, partially enforced on April 1, 2006, and then fully enforced on October 1, 2006.

(2) Content of the “Services and Support for Persons with Disabilities Act” and Measure to Promote the Law

The “Services and Support for Persons with Disabilities Act” aims at realizing a community where people with disabilities can live anxiety free through the systematic establishment of services for people with disabilities, improvement of employment support, and facilitating their transfer to community life. More concretely,

- ① Creating a system that provides services in a uniform manner regardless of type of disabilities
- ② Realizing user-oriented service systems through reform of the facility/service systems that have been too complex regarding individual disabilities
- ③ Creating new employment support program and further improvement of employment support measures through stronger cooperation between welfare and employment
- ④ Introduction of degree of disability categories as subjective criterion for determining the necessity of support
- ⑥ Realizing a system that is supported by everyone through review of co-payments and obligating the government to share the cost

were all included in this act.

As all these matters are essential in promoting measures for the health and welfare of people with disabilities, it is important to firmly establish them among the public. However, considering the drastic nature of the reform, special measures were decided upon in December 2006 and are

now being implemented to cope with the various opinions expressed upon them by carefully including further reductions of co-payment and spending 120 billion yen over 3 years as a measure to ease the sudden change for service providers. In addition, in response to a suggestion from a project team formed from ruling parties on self-sufficiency support for people with disabilities, emergency measures with an eye to future drastic revisions of the Services and Support for Persons with Disabilities Act were decided upon in December 2007 and have been implemented since FY 2008. Efforts are being made to firmly establish the Services and Support for Persons with Disabilities Act among the public through implementing them in cooperation with local governments. In addition, discussions on the entire system will continue to be made toward drastic revision of the law by taking into consideration its supplementary provisions that require review 3 years after being enforced.

(3) Promotion of Measures for Social Participation

The “Law to Amend the Law Concerning Assistance Dogs for Persons with Disabilities” was approved at an extraordinary Diet session in 2007. Accordingly, the provisions to position complaint desks in all prefectures that were made in April 2008 have been clarified upon and workplaces or offices with a certain number of workers will be obliged to accept assistance dogs. In consideration of this revision, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has prepared an “Assistance Dogs for People with Disabilities Consultation Support Manual” that aims to be of support to prefectural consultation desks. In addition, enlightenment activities are being executed that include making/distributing posters, pamphlets, and stickers as well as establishing a website.

2. Improvement of Measures to Support Employment

Employment support for people with disabilities is very important in a self-sufficient community life. The “Services and Support for Persons with Disabilities Act” aims at improving the following points.

(1) Facilitating Transfer to Regular Employment

1) **Promotion of systematic establishment of regular employment transfer support program**

An employment transfer support program to implement job training, on-the-job training, and workplace adaptation support after employment is vital for those who hope to have regular employment and expected to be employed in promoting employment support from the welfare side. Hence the government set the basic policy of increasing the number of people with disabilities who will transfer to regular employment to 4 times that of the current number (from 2,000 to 9,000 per year) by the end of 2011 with all local governments to systematically act in accordance to the

welfare plans for people with disabilities.

These measures will be promoted through setting concrete goals for next 5 years through the “Strategy for Improvement of Growth” which was compiled in February 2007, with verifying what has been achieved.

In FY 2008, taxation system was created for promoting order to “places to work” for people with disabilities. With this system, additional depreciation deductions for depreciable assets acquired during a certain period of time will be approved for enterprises that have placed more orders than previous years at businesses which provide employment transfer support outlined in the Services and Support for Persons with Disabilities Act, special-purpose Subsidiary companies of the same act, or business places that employ more than the average number of people with severe disabilities during the period of FY 2008 through to FY 2012.

2) Collection/announcement of successful cases

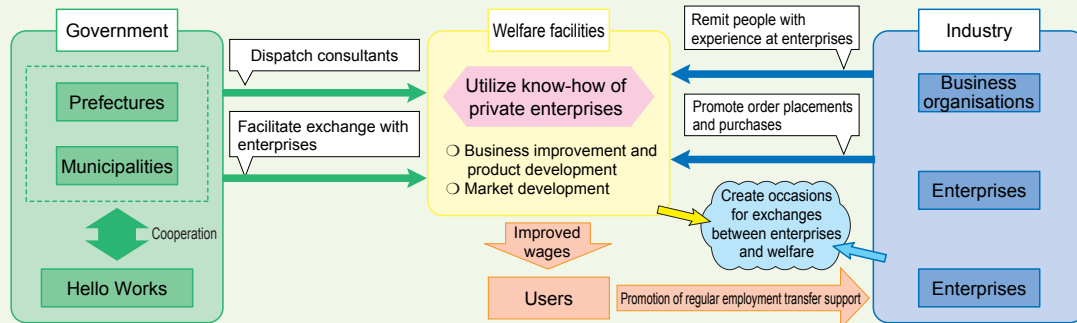
As employment transfer support programs are the first program which support the transfer to regular employment from the welfare side, business know-how is somewhat lacking. Hence efforts are being made to more effectively operate the program through collecting a wide range of business cases and then making that information available.

(2) Improvement of Welfare Employment through a “5 Year Plan to Double Wages”

In addition to employment transfer support, improving the wage level at welfare facilities is important for people with disabilities in being financially self-sufficient in communities. Improved wage levels are included in the “Strategy for Improvement of Growth” as part of “improved welfare employment through the ‘5 Year Plan to Double Wages’” in promoting unified measures to be taken by the government and the private sector (see Figure 8-1-1). Prefectures will formulate “plans to double wages” in providing concrete measures to double wages and make efforts to achieve that goal in next 5 years, by FY 2011. More concretely, efforts will be made to improve operation and develop administrative sense through accepting business consultants, highly specialized technical experts, and people with business employment experience. In addition, development of products and markets will be carried out in cooperation with general enterprises.

Figure 8-1-1. Improvement of Welfare Employment through the "5 Year Plan to Double Wages"

- In addition to employment transfer support, improved wage levels for people with disabilities that work in the form of non-employment is important for their financial self-sufficiency. Hence unified measures by the government and private sector are being promoted in accordance with the "5 Year Plan to Double Wages".
- More concretely, measures that include the following and that utilize the technologies and know-how of private enterprises will be implemented at workplaces:
 - Operational improvement and development of an administrative sense (point of view) through accepting business consultants or people with experience at enterprises
 - Cooperation with general enterprises, such as development of attractive products and markets



3. Promotion of Measures for Mental Health and Welfare

(1) Social Rehabilitation Support for People with Mental Disorders

Measures for mental health and welfare are being implemented based on the concept of a “shift from hospitalized medical treatment to living in communities”. A particularly urgent issue is improving the required support for hospitalized patients that would leave hospital on their own free will if the conditions were satisfactory for living self-sufficiently in communities.

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare formulated the “Vision for Reform of Mental Health and Medical Welfare” in September 2004 that aimed at eliminating hospitalized patients who could leave hospital if the conditions were right in next 10 years through division of the roles of psychiatric wards and social rehabilitation promotional measures for people with mental disorders.

More concretely, a system to provide services in a uniform manner, regardless of the type of disability including physical, mental retardation, or mental disorders has been created. In addition, social rehabilitation support measures for people with mental disorders are being implemented through setting the goal of decreasing the number of hospitalized patients that could leave hospital on the right conditions in welfare plans for people with disabilities and using it as a numerical target that welfare service establishment are required to achieve.

Since FY 2008, community transfer promotion staff has been placed at consultation support service providers to provide support for hospitalized patients that can leave with right condition, which includes support for leaving hospital and living in community. Support measures are being further improved by implementation of the “Programs of Special Measures to Support Community Transfer for People with Mental Disorders” to promote the steady transfer of people with mental disorders back to community life through placement of community system establishment

coordinators, who will promote the establishment of the necessary system for community life.

In addition, the mathematical methods used to estimate the standard numbers of beds needed in medical care plans were reviewed in April 2006 in supporting the early release of patients from hospital, and medical fee revision of FY 2008 focused acute stage evaluations and evaluation of hospitals' efforts in transferring patients into community life.. And hence measures for the active promotion of social rehabilitation of people with mental disorders are being implemented.

(2) Revision of the Mental Health and Welfare Law

Taking the "Vision in Reform of Mental Health and Medical Welfare" into consideration, the Mental Health and Welfare Law was revised to facilitate securing appropriate community medical care for people with mental disorders. A guidance/supervision system for psychiatric hospitals was also reviewed in that revision. More concretely, municipalities can place its mental health and welfare consultants from April 2006. And since October 2006, system to disclose the names of psychiatric hospitals that did not obey orders for improvement and exceptional measures for consultations related to hospitalization in case of emergencies were also introduced.

In addition, the conventional system of providing support expenses for the outpatient treatment of people with mental disorders, which was implemented in accordance with the Mental Health and Welfare Law, has been integrated into "medical care to support independence" together with medical rehabilitation services and medical aid for children with potential disabilities while making necessary the revisions that included co-payments, and has been in operation since April 2006.

In October 2006 a space for attaching photographs was added to the health welfare notebooks of people with mental disorders to improve the reliability of the notebook through easy identification as well as making it easier for them to receive the support that includes discounts on admission fees for public facilities and public transportation fares.

(3) Nurturing Certified Psychiatric Social Workers

The environment surrounding mental health and medical welfare measures is drastically changing due to the enforcement of the Services and Support for Persons with Disabilities Act, the Law Concerning Medical Care and Observation, and the Basic-Suicide Prevention Law. As expected the social role of mental health and medical welfare is also changing, and discussions on nurturing and human resource development of highly specialized certified psychiatric social workers have been made in a "Study Group on Nurturing Certified Psychiatric Social Workers" that has been held since December 2007.