

Nutrition Policy in Japan to Leave No One Behind

-For Achieving Sustainable Societies-

Promotion of systematic and effective nutrition
improvement activities through close communication
between nutrition professionals and Champions

2025

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About This Report

The Japanese government hosted the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021 in December 2021. The year 2021 was approximately five years before the deadline for achieving the global nutrition targets 2025 and ten years before the deadline for achieving the SDGs, and it was agreed that further expansion and enhancement of nutrition improvement initiatives should be made to achieve these international goals.

The Summit called on various stakeholders to commit to implementing activities aimed at improving nutrition, with the result that 396 commitments were announced by 181 stakeholders from 78 countries. As one of its own commitments, the Japanese government expressed its intention to further expand the Nutrition Policy in Japan to Leave No One Behind, and to communicate information on both the progress and achievements of this policy every year starting from FY2023.

This report is the third report for communicating information both within and outside of Japan, following reports in FY2023 and FY2024. For FY2025, the report focuses on examples in which nutrition professionals are systematically and effectively promoting nutrition improvement activities in close communication with “Champions,” or top management of organizations leading the activities, and summarizes the progress and achievements of such activities.

In addition, the final section of the report presents the status of efforts to create a healthy and sustainable food environment as part of the Japanese government’s commitment at the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

■ Japan has been training nutrition professionals for over 100 years

- Japan has been training nutrition professionals for over 100 years. Currently, there are two certifications for nutrition professionals in Japan, dietitians and registered dietitians, as stipulated in the Dietitians Act. In particular, the registered dietitian's license is a national certification granted to specialists with more advanced specialized knowledge and skills.

■ Nutrition professionals support nutrition improvement and health promotion throughout Japan

- In Japan, the deployment of nutrition professionals is stipulated to a variety of facilities by laws and regulations, which have been ensuring their nationwide deployment. Such facilities include medical institutions, elderly care facilities, schools, and a wide range of facilities. Nutrition professionals also work for other facilities such as private companies and research institutions.
- Nutrition professionals play a central role in supporting nutrition improvement and health promotion activities throughout Japan, and they are working with many stakeholders in local communities to promote effective actions to improve nutrition.



■ Champions leading nutrition improvement activities from a broad perspective and actions of nutrition professionals who drive Champions are both important

- Given the limited resources of society as a whole, in order to further promote actions to improve nutrition that are tailored to each individual to leave no one behind, it is important for stakeholders to collaborate more organically than ever to address nutrition challenges as a large framework or organization.
- In order to systematically promote activities to improve nutrition, it is imperative to have Champions who lead activities from a broad perspective, such as the top management and executives of organizations. Under the leadership of Champions, nutrition improvement is positioned as an issue to be worked on by the organization as a whole, and systems to support nutrition professionals are established to facilitate the promotion of systematic and effective activities.
- In order to drive Champions who lead nutrition improvement activities, it is important for on-site nutrition professionals to continue to communicate the impacts of activities and the importance of their further promotion within their organizations, and to gain the deeper understanding and trust of the organization's top management and executives.

■ Exploring ways to achieve close communication between Champions who lead nutrition improvement activities and nutrition professionals

- In this report, we present four pioneering examples of systematic and effective organization-wide nutrition improvement activities realized through close communication between nutrition professionals at working levels and the top management and executives of their organizations.
- Examples presented in this report includes efforts to position nutrition improvement activities as a priority issue for the organization, efforts made accelerated with financial support, as well as efforts to create an environment in which nutrition professionals can maximize their capabilities by strengthening the foundation of their activities and establishing cooperative frameworks within the organization.
- These examples are of great help when considering how to achieve close communication between Champions who lead nutrition improvement activities and nutrition professionals.

This report presents four pioneering examples

No.	Field	Organization	Key point
①	Local government	Nakasatsunai Village, Hokkaido	Establishment of a village-wide system to promote initiatives integrating nutrition improvement and region development through the active leadership of the village mayor and support for nutrition professionals
②	Local government	Fukuoka Prefecture	Strong endorsement of efforts for a sodium reduction initiative by the governor and the resulting expansion of the scale of efforts with further promotion of new collaboration within and outside the organization
③	Medical care and long-term care	Aizawa Hospital	Sharing of future vision and challenges of the local community among top management of the organization and nutrition professionals, and their implementation of seamless nutrition management
④	Medical care and long-term care	Heisei Medical Welfare Group	Organization management and nutrition professionals deeply share the importance of nutrition improvement and establish a system enabling high-quality dietary management across all facilities in the Group



Introduction

Further international contribution by sharing Japan's knowledge with the world

- The knowledge from the four examples of systematic and effective nutrition improvement initiatives in this report will be useful not only for organizations working on nutrition improvement in the fields of government, medical care, and long-term care, but also for all organizations involved in nutrition improvement, those aspiring nutrition professionals, and those involved in education at training schools.
- With the opportunities provided by the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021 and the Nutrition for Growth Summit 2025 in Paris, Japan would like to contribute to fostering momentum for nutrition improvement by sharing with the world the knowledge and experience gained from over 100 years of nutrition improvement initiatives, to tackle nutrition challenges as well as to achieve sustainable societies.

Japan has a history of training nutrition professionals for over 100 years

In 1924, Dr. SAIKI Tadasu established the Nutrition School to train nutrition professionals who can provide dietary guidance and operate food service management in order to eliminate nutritional deficiencies, marking the inception of the history of dietitian training. This was followed by the enactment of the Dietitians Act in 1947, which legally codified the training of dietitians. Currently, there are two certifications for nutrition professionals in Japan, dietitians and registered dietitians, as stipulated in the Dietitians Act. In particular, the registered dietitian's license is granted to specialists with more advanced specialized knowledge and skills, and who have passed the national examination for registered dietitians.

<Overview of nutrition professional certifications in Japan>

License category	Registered Dietitian	Dietitian
	License granted by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare	License granted by prefectural governors
Main facilities with deployment regulations	Facilities that require special nutritional guidance and food service management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospitals that provide advanced medical care Food service facilities that require medical nutrition management 	General facilities that require nutritional guidance and food service management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospitals · Child welfare facilities Company cafeterias · Schools Elderly care facilities · Correctional facilities
Licensing requirements	Acquisition of the required credits at training schools	
	Pass of the national examination for registered dietitians (Examination subjects: clinical nutrition, public health nutrition, etc.)	—

Nutrition professionals are deployed nationwide to support local medical care, long-term care, and health promotion

Japan stipulates the deployment of nutrition professionals and designates to a wide range of facilities such as medical institutions, elderly care facilities, and schools. This requirement started in 1947 when related laws such as the Health Center Law (currently the Community Health Act) and the Medical Care Act were enacted and required health centers and hospitals, etc. to hire dietitians.

Since then, various laws have prescribed the placement of dietitians and registered dietitians to a variety of facilities, and Japan has been ensuring nationwide deployment of nutrition professionals under these laws. Additionally, nutrition professionals also work for private companies and research institutions and are involved in nutrition improvement and health promotion at various sites.

Nutrition professionals who have been deployed in these ways play a central role in supporting nutrition improvement and health promotion throughout Japan, and they work with many stakeholders, such as local government organizations and medical institutions, long-term care and welfare facilities, private organizations and businesses, and volunteer residents (who are tasked with promoting diet improvement), to promote effective actions to improve nutrition.

<Major facilities to which dietitians and registered dietitians are deployed and number deployed>



Further collaboration is necessary to promote actions to improve nutrition to leave no one behind

Health and nutrition challenges in Japan are becoming more complex as society becomes more complex and aging population becomes increasingly severe. It is therefore imperative for experts in various fields to work together to address these challenges.

In addition, given the limited resources of society as a whole, in order to further promote actions to improve nutrition to leave no one behind that are tailored to each individual, it is important that stakeholders collaborate more organically than ever to address nutrition challenges as a large framework or organization.

Champions leading initiatives from a broad perspective and activities of nutrition professionals who develop Champions are both important for further promoting nutritional improvement activities to leave no one behind

Under these circumstances, in order for organizations to seamlessly promote nutrition improvement initiatives, it is imperative to have Champions who lead nutrition improvement activities from a broad perspective, such as the top management and executives of organizations. By having Champions exercise strong leadership, position nutrition improvement as an issue to be addressed by the organization, and establish systems to support nutrition professionals by proactively reaching out to other executives of the organization and related departments and organizations, all stakeholders can collaborate organically to promote nutrition improvement activities systematically and effectively.

In addition, the establishment of such Champions requires a deep understanding of and resonance with nutrition improvement among these individuals. This is made possible by nutrition professionals who continue to communicate on a regular basis the progress of nutrition improvement activities and the importance of their further promotion within the organization, and it is essential for them to gain the deep understanding and trust of the organization's top management and executives.

Exploring ways to achieve close communication between Champions of initiatives and nutrition professionals through pioneering examples

In this report, we present pioneering examples in which systematic and effective nutrition improvement initiatives have been promoted through close communication between nutrition professionals and the top management and executives of their organizations.

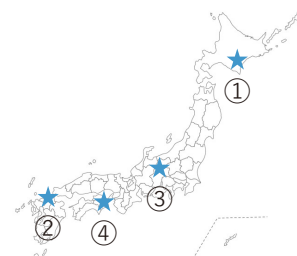
These examples have in common that the organizations have positioned nutrition improvement initiatives as a priority issue to be addressed by the organization, and in order to achieve this goal, they have created an environment in which nutrition professionals can maximize their capabilities by proactively securing specialists, strengthening the foundation of the activities of nutrition professionals by enhancing training frameworks, and establishing systems within the organization.

There are also examples of organizations that have adopted financial and economic measures necessary for promoting nutrition improvement initiatives to achieve the organization's long-term vision, thereby creating a ripple effect in the community by establishing relationships with external parties who share the same vision.

We hope that these examples will teach about the importance of close communication between Champions who lead nutrition improvement initiatives and nutrition professionals, and also, they will be reference for how such collaboration can be achieved within organizations.

Examples of Nutrition Improvement Initiatives

List and Overview of Initiatives



No.	Field	Organizations	Page
①	Local government	Nakasatsunai Village, Hokkaido	10–13
②	Local government	Fukuoka Prefecture	14–17
③	Medical care and long-term care	Aizawa Hospital	18–21
④	Medical care and long-term care	Heisei Medical Welfare Group	22–25

*The mark for Heisei Medical Welfare Group indicates the location of its head office

Case Summary

No.	Overview
①	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since FY2016, Nakasatsunai Village has been implementing "Rainbow project" to encourage eating a variety of colored vegetables, with the aim of improving diet and promoting better health among local residents by increasing their vegetable intake. This project was initiated by a registered dietitian when consolidating local nutrition issues during the formulation of the village's health promotion plan. The registered dietitian also focused on that increasing the consumption of locally produced food would lead to the revitalization of local industry, and after reaching out to the staff and executives of other departments, a village-wide system to promote the project was established. The village mayor, who has a strong interest in health promotion, has pledged to promote this project as a key policy for regional community development. In addition, the village mayor has been directly supporting the promotion of initiatives by sharing information about the project on his own social media accounts and by being personally involved in the activities of registered dietitians.
②	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fukuoka Prefecture, where per capita sodium intake is high and efforts to reduce sodium intake have been a longstanding challenge, started a sodium reduction project called "TRY! Salt Smart" from FY2023 with the aim of promoting adequate sodium intake. A registered dietitian in the division in charge took the time to conceptualize a plan for this project aimed to reduce sodium intake based on the governor's policy and proposed it as a new project. After the start of the project, the registered dietitian was tasked with all aspects of the initiative and has also been making efforts to establish collaborative relationships with companies and the Fukuoka Dietitians' Association. This project was formed with the governor's request for the expansion of the scale and detailed proposal for the project. Even after the launch of the project, which has contributed to both better health and local production for local consumption, the governor has been actively involved in it and supported its promotion, especially in terms of public communication, including presenting the project at events both inside and outside the organization.
③	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aizawa Hospital is a core acute care hospital in its region. Aiming to provide seamless nutrition management from the stage of admission to home-based care, the hospital has been focused for many years on developing an internal system to provide nutrition management in the hospital and home-based medical care support. A registered dietitian in the Food and Nutrition Service shared with the Chairperson the existing challenges related to nutrition management and a vision for the future and proposed a basic philosophy of providing holistic medical care as well as nutritional care management that respects the wishes of patients and their families. To achieve this goal, the hospital has been strengthening its organizational structure both quantitatively and qualitatively by hiring more registered dietitians and improving its education system. The Chairperson has presented a clear vision for the hospital with an eye on the future of the local community, and has encouraged taking on new challenges that allow frontline personnel to work together in tandem. He has also supported the nutrition management initiative by being accepting of mistakes and striving to foster an organization in which registered dietitians can make new proposals easily.
④	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Heisei Medical Welfare Group operates over 100 facilities nationwide and provides medical and welfare services to patients and residents in recovery and chronic stages of their diseases. In order to realize its mission, the Group has committed to providing "meals that everyone can enjoy," and has been working to establish a system that allows implementation of a high standard of dietary management at all facilities. Led by a registered dietitian in the Nutrition Department, which oversees nutrition-related operations for the entire Group, this initiative has led to the hiring of more registered dietitians, improvements in the work environment, and the creation of Group-wide manuals, and implements dietary management centered on the patients and residents at each facility. The Group representative and the rest of the management team have come to understand the importance of nutrition, creating an environment in which registered dietitians can proactively work on nutrition interventions. Moreover, the management team has provided the necessary support for the implementation of improvements proposed by registered dietitians, and this has expedited the progress of the Group's nutrition management.

Nakasatsunai Village, Hokkaido

Establishment of a village-wide system to promote initiatives integrating nutrition improvement and region development through the active leadership of the village mayor and support for nutrition professionals

Key messages

- Since FY2016, Nakasatsunai Village has been implementing “Rainbow project” to encourage eating a variety of colored vegetables, with the aim of improving diet and promoting better health among local residents by increasing their vegetable intake.
- This project was initiated by a registered dietitian when consolidating local nutrition issues during the formulation of the village’s health promotion plan. The registered dietitian also focused on that increasing the consumption of locally produced food would lead to the revitalization of local industry, and after reaching out to the staff and executives of other departments, a village-wide system to promote the project was established.
- The village mayor, who has a strong interest in health promotion, has pledged to promote this project as a key policy for regional community development. In addition, the village mayor has been directly supporting the promotion of initiatives by sharing information about the project on his own social media accounts and by being personally involved in the activities of registered dietitians.

Introduction

Regional information



Prefecture and municipality	Hokkaido Nakasatsunai Village
Population	3,836 (as of February 2025)
Representative	Mayor MORITA Masahiko
Department in charge	Public Health Group, Welfare Division



Nakasatsunai Village is located along the basin of the Satsunai River in the southwestern part of the Tokachi Plain in Hokkaido. Agriculture is the primary industry, mainly producing cold-climate crops, dairy, and meat. In recent years, the village has seen an increasing number of young families moving in.

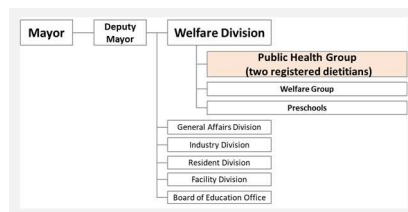
Organizational information



Exterior view of the village hall



Staff of the Welfare Division



Department in which the nutrition professional involved in the project

The Public Health Group of the Welfare Division (consisting of ten staff members) is responsible for health services and programs for mothers and children, adults, and the elderly, vaccinations, and nutritional guidance. Among them, two registered dietitians—a Deputy Director and a junior staff member—oversee community nutrition and dietary improvement and health promotion initiatives for residents.

Health and Nutrition Issues

Identified issues

- ▶ From 2013 to 2014, as part of the process of formulating the village’s health promotion plan, the registered dietitian conducted interviews with local residents and supermarkets. In addition, a survey was conducted to understand the health issues among the residents with a university.
- ▶ The interviews revealed health and nutrition concerns such as high meat expenditure and low vegetable expenditure, the number of people with a high HbA1c level (the village ranked fifth worst in Hokkaido), and a rising trend of obesity, particularly among men. These findings highlighted the need for efforts to increase vegetable intake.



Leaflet of the health promotion plan

Overview of Activities

Rainbow Project to encourage eating a variety of colored vegetables for dietary improvement and health promotion

To tackle the health and nutrition challenges, Nakasatsunai Village has been implementing so called rainbow project to encourage eating a variety of colored vegetables (the “Project”), which aims to encourage eating a variety of colored vegetables for dietary improvement and health promotion. The Project includes the following initiatives which:



Logo of the Project

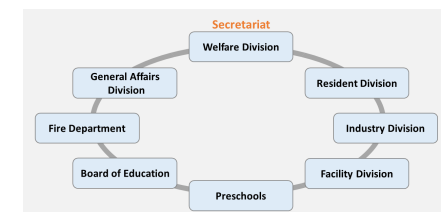
- Create and sell local vegetable recipe books with the cooperation of the village’s supporters called Health Mates
- Raise public awareness of vegetable intake in collaboration with local vegetable stands
- Introduce healthy meals, developed with health-related companies, at local restaurants
- Conduct a health credit point project
- Conduct the “Irodori Plus” stamp rally program, which offers meals containing at least 100 g of vegetables at participating local restaurants, in conjunction with the health credit point project

To further engage residents, the village created visually intuitive educational materials focusing on vegetable colors and used them in seminars and other outreach opportunities. In addition, initiatives like the “Vegetable Lovers Project”, organized with local preschools, and food and nutrition education programs, organized with the youth division of the local agricultural cooperative, were launched to raise awareness and encourage dietary changes to increase vegetable intake.

A multisectoral approach to regional and industrial development

The Project is an effort to improve dietary habits to increase vegetable intake. It also aims to promote the consumption of locally produced food to support regional and industrial development as the village has many vegetable farmers and distributors. By engaging various stakeholders beyond the health department, the Project has evolved into a multisectoral initiative.

To facilitate the planning and implementation of the Project, a multidepartment internal committee has been established. As the Public Health Group is made up primarily of public health professionals, collaboration with other departments was essential to integrate nutrition improvement efforts into broader regional and community development efforts. In this context, the registered dietitian asked the planning and industrial promotion departments for advice on initiating the Project. In response, the deputy mayor proposed forming an interdepartmental committee. This proposal led to the successful establishment of the committee involving multiple village departments, helping smoothly implement the Project.



Organization of the internal committee

Promoting the Project as a key initiative for community development

In the planning and launch of the Project, the registered dietitian played a crucial role in identifying health and nutrition challenges and discussing the project concept. As the project progressed with the involvement of the entire organization, the village mayor also proved essential for his active support.

The mayor has adopted the village development policy, “A Healthy, Culturally Rich, and Beautiful Village.” He strongly endorsed the project, recognizing that his vision aligned with the Project’s goal of promoting health and revitalizing the local community. Inspired by the registered dietitian’s dedication to the Project, he committed to promoting it as a key village policy.

He believes that it is important to make the Project enjoyable for residents and takes pleasure in participating in its activities, always looking for ways to enhance its appeal.

He also emphasizes the importance of organization-wide involvement in such initiatives. To ensure that all village employees have a sense of ownership of the Project, he consistently encourages their participation and engagement.



Opening of the Machinaka Kitchen Studio (May 2024)

Active PR and support from the leadership

In this Project, the mayor actively communicates its information and works closely with the registered dietitians by providing advice and other direct support.

For example, in the village’s public relations magazine, he frequently mentions the activities and progress of the Project, inviting residents to participate. He also publishes the Future Newspaper on his own, an annual report outlining the village’s projects and future outlook for village employees, which consistently features the Project to ensure that even staff outside the health department can understand its progress and achievements. These efforts have deepened organizational understanding of the Project’s importance and facilitated smooth cross-departmental communication.

He has even accompanied the registered dietitians in promoting the recipe books created as part of the Project, directly engaging with bookstores and businesses in neighboring regions to seek their cooperation.



Mayor recognizing top achievers in the health credit point project

Leveraging the advantages of a small municipality for close communication

Nakasatsunai Village has leveraged the advantages of a small municipality to create an environment where senior officials and department staff can easily and swiftly communicate with one another.

After the project’s lead registered dietitian was promoted to a managerial position, opportunities for direct communication with the mayor increased further. This has enabled timely and detailed reporting and discussions on the project progress and emerging challenges.

This direct communication provides the mayor with a clearer understanding of the progress, resident feedback, and the efforts of the dietitians, which leads to his active support for the Project. Also, seeing directly how the dietitians and residents are responding to the support gives the mayor motivation to move the project forward.



The lead dietitian discussing with the mayor

Dietary improvements and increased public awareness

The Project has brought improvements in dietary habits among the resident, including an increase in vegetable intake among men and a reduction in sodium intake.* However, vegetable intake in the village residents remains low, when compared to national and Hokkaido averages, and vegetable intake among women has declined from a 2015 survey. For this reason, the village is planning to further advance the Project.

* Nakasatsunai Village’s Third Health Promotion Plan: *Ikiiki Genki Nakasatsunai* (June 2024)

	2015	2023
Men	231.0 g	268.6 g
Women	283.4 g	258.8 g

Vegetable intake (in residents aged 15 to 74)*

	Nakasatsunai Village 2023	Hokkaido 2022	Hokkaido’s targets
Men	256.0 g	266.8 g	350 g or more
Women	249.5 g	287.0 g	350 g or more

Vegetable intake (in residents aged 20 or older)*



Nutrition and cooking class for pregnant women in the village

Participation in the health credit point project, one of the key parts of the Project, has increased steadily. The cumulative number of participants grew from 20 testers in the first year to 1,318 (from 2017 to 2024). After the application process was refined in FY2024, the number of participants in the Challenge Course (a more challenging course for residents with higher health awareness) increased significantly (649 participants in FY2023 and 688 participants in FY2024).

With interest in the health credit point project increased even among junior high school students, there has been a growing public awareness of adequate dietary intake and healthy behaviors as many residents have participated in nutrition- and diet-related events at the *Machinaka Kitchen Studio*, which opened in May 2024.

Champion and Registered Dietitians



Name and position

MORITA Masahiko,
Mayor

Background

Morita was elected as a member of the Nakasatsunai Village Assembly in 2015. He was assumed office as Nakasatsunai Village Mayor in 2017 and is currently serving his second term (from 2021).



Name and position

NAGAI Chizuru,
Deputy Director

Background and career path

Nagai joined the village government in 1996 and has since been engaged in developing the village’s health promotion plans and providing nutritional guidance to the residents as a registered dietitian. Assumed the current position in April 2020, she is involved in overall public health policies for the village.



Name and position

ISHIKAWA Emi,
Registered Dietitian

Background and career path

Ishikawa joined the village government in 2022, initially serving as a dietitian at a preschool. Assumed the current position in 2024, charged with nutrition guidance to the residents.

Strong endorsement of efforts for a sodium reduction initiative by the governor and the resulting expansion of the scale of efforts with further promotion of new collaboration within and outside the organization

Key messages

- Fukuoka Prefecture, where per capita sodium intake is high and efforts to reduce sodium intake have been a longstanding challenge, started a sodium reduction project called "TRY! Salt Smart" from FY2023 with the aim of promoting adequate sodium intake.
- A registered dietitian in the division in charge took the time to conceptualize a plan for this project aimed to reduce sodium intake based on the governor's policy and proposed it as a new project. After the start of the project, the registered dietitian was tasked with all aspects of the project and has also been making efforts to establish collaborative relationships with companies and the Fukuoka Dietitians' Association.
- This project was formed with the governor's request for the expansion of the scale and detailed proposal for the project. Even after the launch of the initiative, which has contributed to both better health and local production for local consumption, the governor has been actively involved in it and supported its promotion, especially in terms of public communication, including presenting the project at events both inside and outside the organization.

Introduction

Regional information



Prefecture	Fukuoka Prefecture
Population	5,096,883 (as of January 2025)
Representative	Governor HATTORI Seitaro
Department in charge	Health Promotion Division



Photo provided by the Fukuoka Prefecture Tourism Association

Fukuoka Prefecture is located in the northern part of Kyushu and serves as an important domestic and international transportation hub. The prefecture has a rich natural environment with facing the sea in the north and having fertile plains and mountainous terrains inland. The total population is about 5.1 million, and the gross prefectural product (nominal) is about 20 trillion yen. There are diverse industries such as manufacturing, agriculture, commerce, services, and finance.

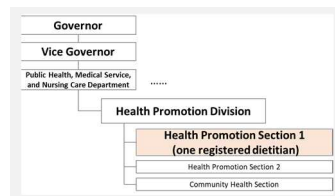
Organizational information



Exterior view of the prefectural office



Staff of the Health Promotion Division



Department in which the nutrition professional involved in the project

The Health Promotion Division is responsible for health promotion and public health services and programs. The division's Health Promotion Section 1 (five staff members) oversees health promotion planning, dietary improvement, and health-focused management practices. Among them, one registered dietitian is working on dietary improvement projects.

Identified issues

- The average healthy life expectancy in Fukuoka Prefecture falls below the national average for both men and women.^{*1}
*1 Fukuoka Prefecture Health Promotion Plan: *Ikiiki Kenko Fukuoka 21* (March 2024)
- In addition, the per capita sodium intake is high, and nearly half of those aged 20 and over have hypertension.^{*2} The prefectural government recognized the need for action to reduce sodium intake.
*2 FY2022 Health Promotion Survey Report of Fukuoka Prefecture (March 2023)

Comparison of healthy life expectancy and average life expectancy with national figures (by gender)

	Fukuoka Prefecture		Nationwide	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Healthy life expectancy	72.22 years	75.19 years	72.68 years	75.38 years
Average life expectancy	81.24 years	87.47 years	81.41 years	87.44 years

Percentage of hypertension patients in Fukuoka Prefecture (aged 20 and over, by gender)

	2011	2016	2022
Men	60.6%	63.4%	47.9%
Women	44.2%	39.4%	44.0%

Overview of Activities

Sodium reduction project involving mass media

To extend the healthy life expectancy of residents, Fukuoka Prefecture launched the Fukuoka Prefecture Health Promotion Movement. This initiative brings together a wide range of stakeholders, including public health and medical organizations, to promote public health.

The Movement is based on three key pillars: increasing health checkup participation rates; improving dietary habits; and regular physical activities. To improve dietary habits, the prefectural government launched a sodium reduction project called "TRY! Salt Smart" ("Salt Smart")* in 2023, aiming to promote adequate sodium intake.

* "Salt Smart" is a coined term derived from "Smartly Use Salt."



Kickoff event of "TRY! Salt Smart"



Recipe contest

The Salt Smart project has been widely publicized. Its kickoff event in September 2023, joined by the governor, attracted significant attention with extensive coverage from local television stations and newspapers. The prefectural government also collaborated with a well-known cooking expert, who frequently appears on TV shows, to draw more public attention. They publish online low-sodium recipes created by the expert and organize recipe contests, where the expert and the governor serve as judges.

In 2023, the first year of the project, an intensive media campaign was launched to raise public awareness. Such media coverage, combined with persistent efforts by project staff, helped increase support from businesses, which were initially reluctant to cooperate due to concerns about profitability but gradually recognized the significance of the prefecture-wide initiative.

Governor's leadership in expanding the project and concrete proposals

The governor, who previously oversaw the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Department as vice governor, understands the importance of good diet through his interactions with experts, chefs, and others who are committed to creating delicious and healthy meals.

In preparing for the launch of the Salt Smart project, the registered dietitian in charge considered the concept based on the governor's policy direction and proposed it as a new project. The governor, rather than merely approving it, directed that it be launched as a larger project, and suggested holding a recipe contest and creating low-sodium box meals for sale.

The governor views the sodium reduction initiative as a continuous effort to promote public health. From this perspective, beyond merely reducing sodium intake, he is seeking ways to enable residents to practice sodium reduction while enjoying the rich agricultural, forestry, and fishery products of the prefecture.

Valuing cooperation with residents, he has proposed ideas such as a recipe contest to gather low-sodium recipes from the public, in which he serves as the head judge.



Meeting between the governor and staff from the division in charge

Governor's strong promotion efforts



Governor explaining the Salt Smart project

The governor promotes Salt Smart at every available opportunity, both within and outside the organization. For example, he frequently mentions this project during courtesy visits by municipal officials in the prefecture and at events related to agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. As a result, he is leading the establishment of new partnerships with external stakeholders. By actively participating in Salt Smart events, he also enhances media coverage of the project to amplify its media impact.

The governor's direct involvement has helped local restaurants, supermarkets, and businesses better understand the initiative and facilitated their cooperation for it including developing box meals. In this supportive environment, the registered dietitian can use their own networks with universities, businesses, and restaurants to advance the initiative effectively and efficiently.

Governor's effective leadership in facilitating multisectoral collaboration

The governor recognizes that sodium reduction initiatives can be promoted effectively through a multisectoral approach involving the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Department and other departments, and wants to take the lead in ensuring smooth communication between departments.

In fact, Salt Smart, a priority initiative launched by the governor, has smoother communication channels than bottom-up projects, which facilitate internal understanding and interdepartmental collaboration. Moreover, when project members change, other members provide support to ensure that the initiative continues without interruption.



Working with the public to expand sodium reduction initiatives across the region

This recipe contests have been held twice so far, attracting about 600 low-sodium recipes.

Some of these contest entries have led to the development and commercialization of Salt Smart Box Meals in partnership with universities and private companies.

During the product development phase, the registered dietitian in the division in charge discussed the product concepts and details with company representatives and brought the products to market with the cooperation of the Fukuoka Dietitians' Association.



Salt Smart Box Meals on sale



Sodium reduction seminar for residents

Sodium reduction initiatives have expanded to other municipalities within the prefecture. When a town mayor and council chairperson visited the governor, he explained Salt Smart to them. After this visit, their town newsletters featured sodium reduction, leading to a broader awareness of the initiative and promotion of appropriate sodium intake in their community. To further spread sodium reduction initiatives to other municipalities in the prefecture, the prefectural government is not only communicating information on Salt Smart but also seeking ways to work with local municipalities by gathering information about municipalities that are working on their own sodium reduction initiatives and exchanging opinions with them.

Champion and Registered Dietitians



Name and title

HATTORI Seitaro, Governor

Background

Hattori joined the prefectural government in 1977 and held various key positions, including the Director of the Finance Division of the General Affairs Department, the Deputy Director-General of the General Affairs Department, and the Director-General of the Welfare and Labor Department. He was appointed Vice Governor of Fukuoka in 2011 and assumed office as Governor of Fukuoka in 2021.



Name and title

SARUWATARI Risa, Registered Dietitian

Background and career path

Saruwatari joined the prefectural government in 2022. Initially engaged in improving residents' nutrition and, since 2024, she has been engaged in Salt Smart and other dietary improvement initiatives at the Health Promotion Division.

Sharing of future vision and challenges of the local community among top management of the organization and nutrition professionals, and their implementation of seamless nutrition management

Key messages

- Aizawa Hospital is a core acute care hospital in its region. Aiming to provide seamless nutrition management from the stage of admission to home-based care, the hospital has been focused for many years on developing an internal system to provide nutrition management in the hospital and home-based medical care support.
- A registered dietitian in the Food and Nutrition Service shared with the Chairperson the existing challenges related to nutrition management and a vision for the future and proposed a basic philosophy of providing holistic medical care as well as nutritional care management that respects the wishes of patients and their families. To achieve this goal, the hospital has been strengthening its organizational structure both quantitatively and qualitatively by hiring more registered dietitians and improving its education system.
- The Chairperson has presented a clear vision for the hospital with an eye on the future of the local community, and has encouraged taking on new challenges that allow frontline personnel to work together in tandem. He has also supported the nutrition management initiative by being accepting of mistakes and striving to foster an organization in which registered dietitians can make new proposals easily.

Introduction

Organizational information

Aizawa Hospital is an acute care hospital operated by JISENKAI Healthcare Incorporated Foundation and located in Nagano Prefecture's Matsumoto City, which has a population of approximately 230,000.

Aizawa Hospital has a history of providing medical care tailored to the needs of the local community for over 100 years. In addition, as a hospital that supports regional medical care, it collaborates with other medical institutions in the region and focuses on providing wide-area medical services.

In recent years, with the aging of the local population, the hospital has been working to develop a more advanced emergency and acute care system, not only to provide treatment but also to support people's daily lives through medical care. At the same time, the hospital has been building its community-based medical functions.

As part of these efforts, the hospital newly established a recovery phase rehabilitation ward in 2014 to ensure seamless rehabilitation after acute treatment and provide comprehensive discharge support through a multidisciplinary approach. In addition, to smoothly respond to needs for regional medical care, Aizawa East Hospital was established in 2016 as a foundation for hospital-clinic coordination enabling the provision of comprehensive and continuous medical services.

At Aizawa Hospital, which promotes such initiatives, the Food and Nutrition Service has been established to handle all aspects of nutrition management. As of February 2025, the Food and Nutrition Service has 23 registered dietitians, who provide nutrition management for inpatients, nutrition guidance for outpatients, and support for the nutrition management of patients receiving home-based medical care.



Location	Matsumoto City, Nagano Prefecture
Population	234,111 (as of January 1, 2025)
Organization	Aizawa Hospital
Staff members	1,499 (as of the end of January 2025)
Representative	Chairperson AIZAWA Takao



Exterior view of Aizawa Hospital

Health and Nutrition Issues

Identified issues

- ▶ As the Matsumoto area is experiencing rapid aging and population decline, Aizawa Hospital is working not only to provide treatment but also to support people's daily lives through medical care.
- ▶ In 2013, registered dietitians from the Food and Nutrition Service conducted nutrition assessments on 600 users of Aizawa Hospital's home rehabilitation services. The results revealed that approximately 250 of them were at risk of undernutrition. Based on these findings, the Food and Nutrition Service estimated the number of registered dietitians and costs required for nutrition management of these 250 home care patients. These estimates served as a basis for management decisions to promote the organizational system development.

Overview of Activities

Working with top management for many years to improve the internal system

The Food and Nutrition Service of Aizawa Hospital currently has 23 registered dietitians. Having one registered dietitian per 20 beds, the hospital provides nutritional care management across inpatient services, from specialized intensive care units to recovery phase rehabilitation wards, as well as nutrition guidance for outpatients and home-based patients (home-based medical care support services). Chairperson AIZAWA Takao and manager of the Food and Nutrition Service YANOME Hideki have spent a long time developing this system.

In 2004, when Yanome proposed Aizawa about implementing home-based medical care support services, the advice he received was to first prioritize improving the inpatient care system. Thus, he dedicated the next five years to ensure comprehensive nutrition care for inpatients. Initially, the number of sessions of nutrition guidance was fewer than 100 per month. However, the department built up a track record by upholding the fundamental principle of ensuring that all patients receive comprehensive care and respecting the will of patients and their families. As a result, by around 2009, despite a limited number of registered dietitians, the department had established a system to provide 800 sessions of nutrition guidance per month (see graph on p. 21).

During this time, Yanome continued to share his vision with Aizawa. Over a decade, they systematically improved inpatient care while preparing for home-based medical care support services, which were launched in 2014.



Staff training



Meeting regarding food service management



Home-based care support

Continually strengthening the system both quantitatively and qualitatively for the future

Looking ahead to the state of the community around 2040, the Food and Nutrition Service is working to strengthen the home-based care support system and increase the number of specialized staff. Currently, two registered dietitians are in charge of home-based medical care support, but the goal is to expand to a five-person system in the future. In addition, efforts are being made to develop personnel who understand both medical and nursing care system, as well as the specialized knowledge to support patients' daily lives at home. For this purpose, the hospital established its own certification system.

Furthermore, with the declining working-age population, Aizawa Hospital is also focusing on developing a more supportive work environment to address potential staff shortages in the future. While considering the financial impact of increasing the number of registered dietitian staff and monitoring progress in human resources development, the hospital will continue to strengthen its system in terms of both quantity and quality.

With shared understanding, the initiative champion and frontline staff aligned their vision, leading to the start of a hospital-wide effort to improve the system

Through home visits to local residents, Aizawa learned the difficulty patients and their families face in managing nutrition at home and the challenges in maintaining adequate dietary intake during at-home treatment after discharge from the hospital. As a result, he recognized that it was a critical issue to establish a system to support adequate dietary intake for patients after their return home.

In addition, Yanome also frequently heard from patients during nutrition guidance sessions about their struggles with nutrition management at home. This reaffirmed that patient treatment does not end at discharge but continues beyond it, highlighting the need for seamless nutrition management and the development of a system to support it.

By engaging in discussions based on their shared understanding of these issues, Aizawa and Yanome aligned on a vision of providing nutrition management from the inpatient stage with a view toward home-based medical care, which led to an organizational focus on improving the hospital's nutrition management system.



Meeting between Chairperson Aizawa and Manager Yanome

Setting a vision and supporting the frontline staff in working on their challenges

Aizawa not only supports proactive proposals from staff but also values the importance of allowing mistakes. He has also fostered an environment where registered dietitians find it easy to make proposals, and has supported frontline staff in improving nutrition management. In addition, he ensures that the management and frontline staff share the same direction and work together for the benefit of patients. While doing so, he presents a clear vision for the future and values sharing it with frontline staff.

Moreover, through his discussions with Aizawa, Yanome recognized the importance of training registered dietitians who understand Aizawa Hospital's principles with a strong sense of mission, as well as the need to establish a system to achieve this goal. For this purpose, he developed a career path for these nutrition professionals that defines the phased acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills, including the timing for gaining experience in nutritional care management and handling various diseases, with the aim of fostering human resources who can work with multiple disciplines regardless of their assigned department.

Presenting data on the impact of the efforts and confirming the direction



Meeting on local collaboration

Aizawa and Yanome have set monthly meetings for repeatedly discussing and refining their vision for the future of home-based medical care support while developing concrete measures for improving the system and strategies for securing human resources.

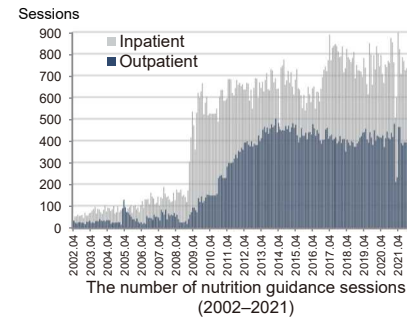
While actively increasing the number of registered dietitians, numerical data is compiled on matters such as the monthly cost per registered dietitian and the number of sessions of nutrition guidance provided, and this is reported to Aizawa. Given the nutrition management being carried out as necessary part to achieve patient-centered medical care and home-based medical care support, the improvement of nutrition management system is being pursued to establish a sustainable system, carefully considering its impact on the hospital management, finances and other factors.

The direct benefits to patients and ripple effects on the surrounding environment

As a result of these organizational improvements, although there was only one registered dietitian when Yanome joined in 2001, that number has now increased to 23. With this enhanced staffing structure, the number of inpatient nutrition management and outpatient nutrition guidance has increased significantly, enabling more patient-centered nutrition management.

In addition, 10 years have passed since the launch of nutrition guidance for home-based medical care patients, and the understanding and satisfaction of multidisciplinary staff regarding the nutrition interventions has increased. The Food and Nutrition Service conducted a survey on the satisfaction of 232 home-based medical care professionals at JISENKAI, including physicians, nurses, physical therapists, and occupational therapists, regarding nutrition guidance at home visits. Most responses were positive, including comments such as, "it led to the prevention of aspiration pneumonia," "it helped patients regain the ability to eat," and "it enabled users to return to a normal life, becoming more cheerful."

Moreover, as efforts on home-based medical care support have accumulated, the hospital has developed collaborative relationships with local medical associations and primary care physicians, and now expanded its collaboration to include Matsumoto City.



Lecture at a training seminar hosted by Matsumoto City

Champion and Registered Dietitians



Name and title

AIZAWA Takao, Chairperson
JISENKAI Healthcare Incorporated Foundation

Background

Aizawa graduated from the Jikei University School of Medicine in 1973 and joined the Second Department of Internal Medicine at the Shinshu University School of Medicine. He became Vice Director of Aizawa Hospital under the JISENKAI Healthcare Incorporated Foundation in 1981, and was appointed Chairperson and Director in 1994. He has served in his current position since 2017. He also serves as President of the Japan Hospital Association.



Name and title

YANOME Hideki, Manager,
Food and Nutrition Service

Background and career path

Yanome joined Aizawa Hospital in 2001. As a registered dietitian in the Food and Nutrition Service, he was responsible for nutritional care management, including nutrition guidance, while also focusing on improving the hospital's nutrition management system. He was appointed Manager of the Food and Nutrition Service in 2004.

Organization management and nutrition professionals deeply share the importance of nutrition improvement and establish a system enabling high-quality dietary management across all facilities in the Group

Key messages

- The Heisei Medical Welfare Group operates over 100 facilities nationwide and provides medical and welfare services to patients and residents in recovery and chronic stages of their diseases. In order to realize its mission, the Group has committed to providing “meals that everyone can enjoy,” and has been working to establish a system that allows implementation of a high standard of dietary management at all facilities.
- Led by a registered dietitian in the Nutrition Department, which oversees nutrition-related operations for the entire Group, this initiative has led to the hiring of more registered dietitians, improvements in the work environment, and the creation of Group-wide manuals, and implements dietary management centered on the patients and residents at each facility.
- The Group representative and the rest of the management team have come to understand the importance of nutrition, creating an environment in which registered dietitians can proactively work on nutrition interventions. Moreover, the management team has provided the necessary support for the implementation of improvements proposed by registered dietitians, and this has expedited the progress of the Group’s nutrition management.

Introduction

Organizational information

The Heisei Medical Welfare Group operates over 100 hospitals, long-term care facilities, and welfare facilities throughout Japan, including in Tokyo and Osaka, and provides medical and welfare services to patients and other recipients in both the recovery and chronic stages of their diseases.

Throughout the entire Group, there is understanding of the importance of nutrition as a foundation for enhancing the effectiveness of treatment and rehabilitation. In the Group’s “Vision Book” created in 2024, the Group set “ensure a patient-centered care policy that prioritizes the patient’s needs over hospital convenience” as one of the key actions to achieve its mission. As a concrete initiative under this action, the Group has focused on providing “meals that everyone can enjoy,” as part of its nutrition management.

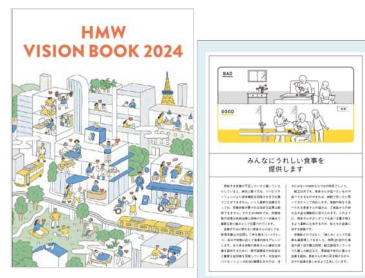
The Nutrition Department was established to oversee nutrition management across the entire Group. The department consists of 1,587 personnel and is structured into the five sections below.

- Nutrition Operations Support Section: Provides support for nutrition management at each facility.
- Planning Section: Develops manuals, etc. and conducts data collection and analysis across all facilities.
- Logistics Section: Centralizes the management of food ingredients used at each facility.
- Cooking Operations Support Section: Provides support for meal service operations at each facility.
- Education and Academic Affairs Section: Develops educational programs for registered dietitians and conducts research.

Through these efforts, the Nutrition Department facilitates information sharing among 350 registered dietitians and dietitians within the Group, enhancing the overall level of nutrition management at each facility.



Headquarters location	Tokushima City, Tokushima Prefecture
Organization	Heisei Medical Welfare Group
Staff members	14,875 (as of the end of January 2025)
Representative	Chief Executive Officer TAKEHISA Takahiro



Group Vision Book

Source: <https://hmw.gr.jp/images/about/VISION-BOOK2024.pdf>

Identified issues

- ▶ In the past, a significant number of patients admitted to hospitals within the Group had not received appropriate nutrition management. A survey^{*1} conducted in 2017 across 16 hospitals, including those within the Group, found that the percentage of elderly patients who were undernutrition^{*2} at the time of admission was 59.6%.

^{*1} Referenced from the regular press conference materials of TAKEHISA Yozo, Chairman of the Japan Association of Medical and Care Facilities (April 13, 2017). The survey examined the percentage of undernutrition patients at admission among 37,730 patients (average age: 81.1 years) hospitalized in 16 facilities between 2010 and 2016, as well as their living situations before admission.

^{*2} In this survey, “undernutrition” referred to elderly patients whose albumin level was below 3.8 g/dL at the time of admission.

Overview of Activities

Providing “meals that everyone can enjoy” and a patient- and resident-centered approach

The Group envisions patients and residents living at home after treatment. It carefully listens to their wishes, as well as those of their families, and strives to provide dietary management that supports their independence.

In care-facilities that serve as living spaces for patients and residents, meals are regarded as an essential part of daily life. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that patients and residents can enjoy their meals by considering factors such as dining place and environment, meal presentation, and the use of fresh ingredients. Moreover, if a decline in dietary intake is observed, multifaceted consideration is conducted to identify the underlying causes, and meal content is adjusted to suit each individual’s condition.

In addition to these efforts, the Group provides 14 standardized types of therapeutic meals across its facilities, ensuring a seamless, smooth response to patients who move between locations within the Group. Additionally, the entire Group maintains a patient- and resident-centered approach by ensuring their oral intake, offering a wide variety of handmade supplementary foods (approximately 80 types), developing its own thickening agents for over 20 years, and accommodating requested personal food items brought in by patients and residents.



Multidisciplinary conference



Examples of inpatient meals (from the hospital’s public relations magazine)



One example of meals provided by the Group

The Nutrition Department oversees the entire Group’s nutrition management

The Group-wide nutrition management system has been improved since around 2011, led by TAKEHISA Takahiro (who was the Head of the Nutrition Department at the time). First, the Nutrition Department was organized to serve as the steering function for nutrition management. Subsequently, efforts were made to increase on-site registered dietitians and dietitians to ensure stable operations, as well as to develop onsite operations manuals, support menu planning, and establish a food management system. The department was divided into the current five sections.

In addition, as the support system for these Group-wide nutrition management was put in place, the role required of registered dietitians shifted from primarily overseeing food service management to focusing on in-ward activities. As nutrition professionals on the front lines, they now work with other medical professionals to provide nutrition support for the independence of patients and residents.

Nutrition management has been considered as foundation of treatment and rehabilitation across the Group for many years

The Heisei Medical Welfare Group has long focused on nutrition management, including the prevention of undernutrition, with efforts continuing since before CEO TAKEHISA Takahiro joined the Group in 2010.

Takehisa also considers nutrition essential, as undernutrition, without proper interventions, can lead to delayed treatment due to organ function decline and muscle weakness, ultimately reducing the effectiveness of rehabilitation and treatment.

The Nutrition Department continues to communicate the necessity of nutrition management across the Group through training programs, including those for new employees, as well as through research activities related to nutrition management.



Meeting between management and staff

Support is provided to help frontline staff take responsibility in engaging nutrition management care



The Group recipe contest hosted by the Nutrition Department

As the importance of nutrition is shared across the entire Group, registered dietitians, led by Nutrition Department Head TSUTSUMI Ryosuke, are proactively driving nutrition management. Since his tenure as head of the Nutrition Department, Takehisa has been working to draw out the opinions of frontline registered dietitians, enabling them to think proactively, make proposals, and take action with a sense of ownership. Although he sometimes provides instructions regarding the operation of Nutrition Department as CEO, he encourages registered dietitians to think for themselves by posing questions, and the ideas that emerge from this form the foundation of nutrition management of the Group.

For the development of human resources who support the nutrition management in the Group, Takehisa has defined the ideal registered dietitian within the Group as “a staff member who approaches nutrition with a sense of ownership and can make professional statement.” In response, Nutrition Department Head Tsutsumi has led the creation of systematic training, educational materials, and educational programs aimed at fostering professional thinking skills among registered dietitians. Currently, these training programs and the education ladder have enabled the training of competent registered dietitians at each facility.

In addition, for over a decade, the Group has enhanced its cooking facilities, reviewed various operational protocols, strengthened nutrition-related organizational structures, and enhanced supportive working environments. These efforts have contributed to the current patient- and resident-centered nutrition management. An essential factor in smoothly advancing better nutrition management has been the establishment of a relationship where registered dietitians consistently consider what is necessary for implementation, while the management team, including Takehisa, is appreciative of their proposals.

Building relationships between management and staff that grants discretion and enables immediate consultation when needed



Since the time when Takehisa served as the Head of the Nutrition Department, he has worked on nutrition management together with staff members of the Nutrition Department. As a result, the Department, now led by Tsutsumi, has been given the responsibility to plan and carry out new activities.

Even now, sharing information between management and the Nutrition Department through close communication remains essential. Takehisa and Tsutsumi hold monthly meetings and ad-hoc ones as needed, ensuring that they are always sharing information on updates from the Nutrition Department and can make proposals and consult on activities related to nutrition.

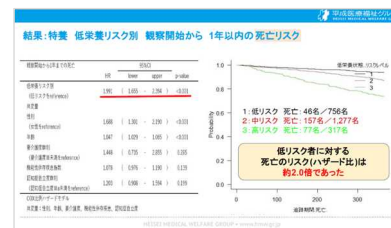
The Group's understanding of the importance of nutrition has a direct impact on the nutrition status of their patients and residents

The establishment of the Nutrition Department has made it possible to implement high-level nutrition management across the Group. There has been an increasing number of cases where patients and care-facility residents report being able to maintain their previous lifestyles after discharge. This has become a major source of motivation for registered dietitians as they work on better nutrition management.

In addition, the Group as a whole understand the importance of nutrition. For example, rehabilitation staff reminds patients of the importance of adequate nutrition. Professionals besides registered dietitians frequently advise patients and residents on the importance of dietary intake. As a result, awareness of adequate nutrition has also been increasing among patients and residents.



Meal rounds



Example of research activities (undernutrition and mortality)

The Nutrition Department's research activities also contribute to these efforts. One example is a follow-up study conducted by the Nutrition Department which examined approximately 3,000 long-term care facility users within the Group. The study revealed that individuals at moderate or high risk of undernutrition had about twice the mortality and 1.5 times the hospitalization risk compared to those at low risk of undernutrition.

Such data has helped instill the importance of nutrition among related personnel at all levels in the Group, from management to frontline staff.

Champion and Registered Dietitians



Name and title

TAKEHISA Takahiro,
Chief Executive Officer

Background

Takehisa joined the Heisei Medical Welfare Group in 2010. Since then, he has been involved in opening hospitals and care-facilities while working to improve the quality of medical and welfare services across the Group. He became the Group CEO in 2022.



Name and title

TSUTSUMI Ryosuke,
Nutrition Department Head

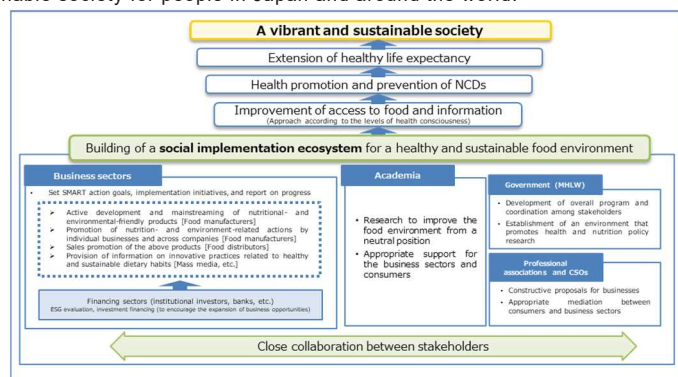
Background and career path

Tsutsumi joined the Heisei Medical Welfare Group in 2012. After working at elderly care facilities, he has served as a registered dietitian at the Nutrition Department and is involved in its organization. Under the leadership of Takehisa, he has focused on establishing the Group-wide nutrition management system. He has held his current position since 2023.

Strategic Initiative for a Healthy and Sustainable Food Environment (Main Activities for FY2024)

About the Strategic Initiative for a Healthy and Sustainable Food Environment

- ✓ Based on the Expert Committee^{*1} Report (released in June 2021) and the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021 (held in December 2021), the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) launched the "Strategic Initiative for a Healthy and Sustainable Food Environment" in March 2022 as a measure to promote the creation of a food environment through collaboration between industry^{*2}, academia, government, professional associations, and civil society.
- ✓ The Initiative recognizes nutritional issues such as "excess sodium intake," "thinness among young women," and "nutritional disparities associated with socioeconomic status" as well as "environmental issues" as critical social issues in Japan.
- ✓ Participating businesses set SMART^{*3} style action goals^{*4}. This initiative aims to develop a food environment that can nudge people to practice healthy eating through multisectoral collaboration and cooperation. The ultimate goal is to extend the healthy life expectancy and realize a vibrant and sustainable society for people in Japan and around the world.



The world envisioned by the Strategic Initiative for a Healthy and Sustainable Food Environment

FY2024 Main Activities

Details of Activities and Expansion of Participating Businesses

Various activities were carried out, including new activities in preparation for the participation by prefectural and other local governments from FY2024 (e.g., development and provision of support tools for local governments, the preparation of the Food Environment Alliance (tentative name)), and the preparation of educational materials and workshops on sodium reduction for children.

The number of participating businesses has been increased to 42, including food supermarket retailers, major confectionery manufacturers, television stations, and financial institutions, all of whom are essential to the promotion of the initiative's activities.

Activities in FY2024

With the aim of gradual development of the initiative, networking opportunities among participating businesses, subcommittee meetings, and working groups were held.

The main activities were as follows.

Steering Committee

Held three times a year (June, September, March)

The Steering Committee comprises representatives of participating businesses, academics, SDG/ESG specialists, professional associations, civil society organizations as a body that discusses and decides on policies of this initiative. This year the Committee discussed the way to report on the initiative's overall evaluation and progress on action goals, efforts to increase the number of new participating businesses, and methods of collaborating with prefectures.

Subcommittee for Promoting Action Goals

Held three times a year (July, December, February)

The Subcommittee for Promoting Action Goals comprises academics, SDG/ESG specialists, professional associations, civil society organizations, and is responsible for supporting the PDCA process to achieve SMART-style action goals set by each participating business (e.g., making suggestions on setting action goals and tracking progress). Following on from FY2023, the subcommittee exchanged opinions with participating businesses and made constructive suggestions regarding their activities in this initiative.

Open forum

Held once a year (December)

The open forum is open to the general public in addition to those involved in the initiative (participating businesses and expert committee members). The progress of the initiative (including good practices related to the action goals of participating businesses) was shared and disseminated. This year's forum had lectures by academics and financial institutions, case studies from participating businesses, and booths introducing the participating businesses. A total of approximately 320 attended, including potential participants, finance industries and the media.

Working group and Networking Opportunities

The initiative held working group meetings with the aim of sharing examples of efforts by participating businesses and networking among participating businesses. A site visit was conducted at a participating supermarket strengthening low-sodium product sales and a networking meeting was held. Besides, working group meetings were held to share up-to-date information to health, nutrition, and finance, with academics and ESG specialists. Also, the initiative prepares materials to disseminate the initiative's efforts, with aiming to involve financial institutions. Further, workshops were held targeting children to raise awareness of sodium reduction.

The events held in FY2024 were as follows.

- Liaison meetings among participating businesses (June, February)
- Subcommittee meetings (August, November)
- Site visit (November)
- Working group meeting on ESG issues (February)
- Networking (August)



Subcommittee meeting



Sodium reduction workshop for children

^{*1} The committee meeting on the promotion of a healthy and sustainable food environment

^{*2} The term "industry" encompasses a wide variety of industries, including food manufacturers, food distributors, media, etc.

^{*3} Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound

^{*4} Each participating business is at least required to set an action goal that contributes to the improvement of "excess sodium intake."

Next Steps and Our International Contribution

Next Steps and Our International Contribution

- **In order to systematically and effectively promote nutrition improvement initiatives, it is important to have top management or such other proponent who leads activities from a broad perspective**

It is difficult to achieve nutritional improvement to leave no one behind with only nutrition professionals. Such actions can be achieved by positioning nutrition as an important area of the organization, working systematically through multisectoral collaboration, and, if necessary, promoting the actions effectively with the involvement of related organizations outside of the organization.

In all four examples presented in this report, not only did on-site nutrition professionals make efforts to undertake actions to improve nutrition to leave no one behind, but the top management of their organizations also played the role of “Champions” and led their nutrition improvement activities from a more comprehensive perspective.

The Champions had a deeper understanding of the importance of nutrition and worked to gain the understanding and cooperation of those around them, including executives within and outside their organizations. The nutrition professionals continued to communicate on the impacts of their nutrition improvement activities and the importance of further promotion within their organization, thereby gaining a deeper understanding and trust of the Champions.

In addition, the Champions and the nutrition professionals shared their organization's vision and the situation on the ground, and a close communication was established.

Through these efforts, multisectoral support for nutrition professionals were established by various stakeholders inside and outside their organization, allowing the nutrition professionals to maximize their capabilities and promote actions to improve nutrition to leave no one behind.

- **The sharing of knowledge within Japan is expected to lead to further promotion of systematic and effective nutrition initiatives**

We believe that the knowledge from the four examples of systematic and effective nutrition improvement activities presented in this report will likewise be useful not only for organizations working on nutrition improvement in the fields of government, medical care, and long-term care, but also for all organizations involved in nutrition improvement as well as those aspiring nutrition professionals and those involved in education at training schools.

We hope that the cases shown in this report would provide lessons learned to further promote nutrition improvement in a sustainable way throughout the country.

- **For further international contribution by sharing Japan's knowledge with the world**

Japan started training nutrition professionals over 100 years ago and has deployed them nationwide. These professionals have played a central role in undertaking actions to improve nutrition to leave no one behind all over Japan. We believe that the knowledge from Japan's long history of nutrition improvement contains many implications that may prove useful for the efforts of other countries.

The involvement of Champions who lead nutrition improvement activities from a more comprehensive perspective, and the everyday efforts of nutrition professionals at working level which drive Champion's leaderships, will likely prove useful even for various organizations working on nutrition improvement in other countries.

With the opportunities provided by the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021 and the Nutrition for Growth Summit 2025 in Paris, Japan would like contribute to building greater momentum for nutrition improvement by sharing with the world the knowledge and experience that Japan has cultivated for more than 100 years of nutrition improvement, to tackle nutrition challenges and, ultimately, to achieve sustainable societies.

List of partner organizations and expert council members

Partner organizations (in the order presented)

Nakasatsunai Village, Hokkaido
Fukuoka Prefecture
Aizawa Hospital
Heisei Medical Welfare Group

FY2024 Budget Project of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

“Set of documents including studies on the progress of nutrition improvement initiatives in Japan on the basis of the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021 with the goal of sharing information in Japan and abroad in FY2025”

Expert council (titles omitted, in Japanese syllabary order)

The Japan Dietetic Association
Japanese Association of Public Health Center Registered Dietitian
Kanagawa University of Human Services
National Institutes of Biomedical Innovation, Health and Nutrition
Nakamura Gakuen University
University of Niigata Prefecture
Aomori University of Health and Welfare

ABE Kinuko
ISOBE Sumie
GOMI Ikuko
TAKIMOTO Hidemi
MIZUMOTO Kaori
MURAYAMA Nobuko
YOSHIIKE Nobuo (Chair)

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