For people, for life, for the future

All officials work as one to promote an ideal health, labour, and welfare administration for the people. It is the catch phrase set to support such a conception.
Message from the Vice-Minister

As expressed by the phrase “from the cradle to the grave”, the Health, Labour and Welfare administration is the administration that is most familiar to people, and closely supports the whole life of each individual.

The major sectors include medical care, long-term care, childcare support, pension reform, labour, and welfare, etc., indicating how closely the administration is related to people’s lives and how diverse the sectors that the Ministry is addressing. The Ministry also plays a central role in “work-style reform”, which the whole government is working on, and is working day by day to build a “society in which all people can play active roles” that makes everyone’s life safe and worth living, including the youth, the elderly, men and women, and persons with disabilities and intractable diseases, etc.

Maintaining the universal health insurance and pension systems, which Japan is so rightfully proud of, leading the “world” as an advanced health country, and creating a community in which the elderly and persons with disabilities can live a satisfying life with purpose -- the administrative work of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is broad ranging, highly responsible, and dynamic. In other words, “there are opportunities within the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare to change the world”.

At present, Japan is facing a major issue of declining birthrate and aging population. Under such circumstances, the roles that the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare should play are significant with a budget accounting for 31 trillion yen that is more than half the national general expenditure. Approximately 32,000 officials of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will work together to gain people’s trust, so that not only people who live now, but also the future generations of their children and grandchildren can feel that they are “happy to have been born in Japan”.

Vice-Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare
Motomichi Kamohara
Work that supports people’s entire lives

Every life stage together with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

The mission of the Ministry is to build a society that ensures lifelong security of each and every person — from birth through post-retirement. It will also support the basis of economic growth of Japan. In order to look after people and their lives and support this country into the future, the Ministry is working to promote various measures.

Medical care
Aiming at medical care for all people

- Health Policy Bureau
  Protecting the universal health insurance system and handing over a sense of security in our daily life to the next generation
  [P07] Health Insurance Bureau

Drug and food safety
Ensuring drug and food safety

- Pharmaceutical Safety and Environmental Health Bureau
  [P08] Health Service Bureau

Health promotion/disease control
Strongly supporting people’s health

- Employment Environment and Equal Employment Bureau
  [P17]

Improve the conditions of employment
Toward the society in which all people can play active roles and balance their work and life

- Employment Standards Bureau
  [P13]

Ensuring working environment
Protecting workers’ livelihoods, safety, and health

- Labour Standards Bureau

Support for persons with disabilities/social welfare and relief assistance
Toward realizing regional cohesive society

- Social Welfare and War Victims’ Relief Bureau
  [P21] Director-General for Human Resources Development

Long-term care insurance
Realizing long-term care in local communities

- Health and Welfare Bureau for the Elderly
  [P23] Pensions

Continuing “intergenerational support” for the next 100 years

- Pension Bureau
  [P27] Vocational skills development
Developing human resources who will be leaders of tomorrow

- Child and Family Policy Bureau
  [P19] P29

Support for children and childcare
For the children who will create the future
Aiming at medical care for all people

The Bureau is working to establish an efficient and high-quality medical care system to enable all people to receive appropriate quality medical care in the environment surrounding medical care that is undergoing a drastic change with a diverse disease structure due to the rapid progress in the declining birthrate and aging population and advanced medical technologies, etc.

Establishment of a medical care system in communities

While medical resources are limited, in order to enable all people to receive appropriate quality medical care, efforts are being made to promote division/coordination of hospital bed functions and enhance home medical services that constitutes an integrated community care system, etc.

Developing, and securing of, medical human resource

Efforts are being made for the development of human resources such as doctors and nurses who will take the role of providing medical care, and workplace adaptation and job leave prevention of medical professionals, including work environment improvement and support for returning to work in hospitals and clinics, etc.

Industrial development in the fields of drugs/medical devices

The pharmaceutical and medical device industry is one of the industries expected to lead economic growth in Japan. The Bureau will promote industrial development that takes into consideration the industrial requirements and support for venture companies in the said fields, etc.

Establishment of a medical care system for the future

With an aging population and progress in the advancement of medical technologies, medical care needs have become more diversified and complicated, including not only treatment-oriented medical care but also the improvement of quality of life in which patients coexist with sickness by treatment of chronic phase diseases and home medical care, etc. In order to address this situation, efforts are being made in formulating the future ideal medical care system in communities as community health care visions, including the future demand for each hospital bed function, etc., to promote division/coordination of hospital bed functions and enhancement of home medical care, etc. Through these efforts, the Bureau is working to establish a medical care system capable of responding to the future of Japan.

An attempt at "new medical care"

As medical technologies advance, people’s mindset and awareness regarding medical care rapidly change as well. People’s ideals and the actual medical care available to them have become more diverse. To provide medical care which will satisfy people’s needs safe and securely, governance reforms such as establishing a medical security system for patients at advanced treatment hospitals, revising medical advertisement regulations have been enforced. Multilateral actions are taken to improve the environment that surrounds medicine today.

Promotion of innovations in the pharmaceutical and medical device industries

Japan is one of the few countries developing new drugs and has cutting-edge manufacturing technologies. Therefore, the pharmaceutical and medical device industry is expected to be an industry that bears economic growth. In recent years, the roles of venture companies that turn advanced science and technology into the development of innovative drugs, etc. are becoming important. Under such circumstances, “Japan Healthcare Venture Summit 2017” was held to promote the development and practical application of innovative drugs, medical devices, and regenerative medical products while advancing the efforts to expand people’s understanding of medical ventures, etc.

For doctors who are generally recognized for their long work hours, work-style reform needs to be promoted. More concretely, after thoroughly identifying the actual working conditions of doctors, efforts will be made to promote transferring/sharing parts of their work with those of other job types, making clinical work more efficient through ICT utilization, reviewing business administration of medical institutions, and providing childbirth/childcare support for female doctors, etc. The Bureau will work on the “work-style reform for doctors” through these work environment improvements and correction of long working hours for doctors.

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has been increasing the quotas at medical schools since FY2008. The uneven geographical distribution in the number of doctors and uneven distribution of clinical areas, however, are becoming more diverse both within and between prefectures. Therefore, resolving such uneven distributions is an urgent issue.
# Health Service Bureau

## Health Promotion/disease control

### Fields under its jurisdiction

- **Health promotion**
  - In order to extend healthy life expectancy and realize a vigorous society in which people can live more healthily both physically and mentally, the Bureau will promote measures against second-hand tobacco smoke, which is known to pose health risks, and provide support for health promotion efforts by companies and local governments, etc.

- **Infectious disease measures**
  - In order to protect people from infectious diseases that threaten mankind across national boundaries, the Bureau is working to strengthen quarantine systems, thoroughly provide vaccinations, promote research and development of therapeutic drugs, and ensure appropriate use of antibiotics, etc.

- **Cancer control measures**
  - The Bureau has been promoting efforts to overcome cancer so that people can prevent avoidable cancer by having appropriate knowledge about cancer and so that patients can receive reliable and reasonable cancer treatment and support anywhere, anytime according to various symptoms of cancer, and continue to live with respect.

- **Intractable/rare disease measures**
  - The Bureau is working on subsidizing medical treatment expenses, promoting early diagnosis and developing suitable medical environments, and promoting research for the development of therapies to enable people with rare diseases for which effective treatments have yet to have been established to live with a sense of security in their communities while continuing long-term recuperation.

## Strongly supporting people’s health

### Our Mission

For the country to be healthy, it is important that its people are healthy. The Health Service Bureau has been making the utmost efforts in implementing health promotion, cancer control measures, and public health measures toward realizing a society in which each citizen can live a high quality healthy life and utilize his/her abilities. Efforts will also be made in overcoming intractable/rare diseases, providing support for patients to live with such diseases in their communities, and enhancing preparedness against infectious diseases occurring domestically or abroad by assuming various situations.

## Health Promotion

### Cancer control measures

The Bureau has been promoting efforts to overcome cancer so that people can prevent avoidable cancer by having appropriate knowledge about cancer and so that patients can receive reliable and reasonable cancer treatment and support anywhere, anytime according to various symptoms of cancer, and continue to live with respect.

### Intractable/rare disease measures

The Bureau is working on subsidizing medical treatment expenses, promoting early diagnosis and developing suitable medical environments, and promoting research for the development of therapies to enable people with rare diseases for which effective treatments have yet to have been established to live with a sense of security in their communities while continuing long-term recuperation.

## Policy

### 01 Protecting people from unwanted second-hand tobacco smoke exposure

Being exposed to smoke generated from tobacco smoked by someone else is referred to as “second-hand tobacco smoke exposure”. It is scientifically clear that second-hand tobacco smoke exposure increases the risk of lung cancer, ischemic heart disease, and strokes, etc.

The Health Service Bureau aims to achieve the prevention of second-hand tobacco smoke exposure by the Tokyo Olympic/Paralympic Games in 2020 and is working to ensure thorough implementation of integrated measures against second-hand tobacco smoke exposure to protect people from unwanted second-hand tobacco smoke exposure.

### 02 Aiming to overcome cancer and live with cancer

Cancer has been the leading cause of death in Japan since 1981, and 50% of people are estimated to suffer from cancer once in their life. Cancer remains an important issue for people’s lives and health.

The Health Service Bureau has set “cancer prevention”, “improvement of cancer treatment”, and “coexistence with cancer” as the three main pillars and has been working to realize cancer genomic medicine, enhance measures against rare cancer and intractable cancer, promote employment support for cancer patients based on the Third-term Basic Plan to Promote Cancer Control Programs formulated with the aim of promoting cancer measures comprehensively and systematically.

The Bureau will continue to make utmost efforts in taking measures aimed at overcoming cancer.

### 03 Protecting people from the risk of infectious diseases to ensure safety and security

In 2017, there were epidemics of avian influenza in China and of pneumonic plague in Madagascar. Due to an accelerated international travel of people and goods across the national borders, the risk of infectious diseases is increasing.

The Health Service Bureau is therefore working to prevent entry of infectious diseases into the country by reinforcing functions of quarantine stations, and strengthening proper responses by administrative/medical institutions to domestic occurrences.

In addition, there was a mass outbreak of measles in Japan in 2017, requiring even more thorough implementation of countermeasures. The Bureau strives to raise public awareness of correct knowledge about infectious diseases and preventive measures such as vaccinations, etc. in peace time to ensure safety and security.

Furthermore, support has been provided for the development of vaccines necessary for both domestic and overseas infectious disease measures ahead of any other country. Moreover, antimicrobial resistant organisms have been a global issue in recent years, and the Bureau has been leading other Asian countries in taking antimicrobial resistance (AMR) measures.

## Influenza Measures

Influenza is an infectious disease that spreads in every winter, and approximately one in every ten people gets infected. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare compiles the “Comprehensive Countermeasures against Influenza this Winter”, every year to provide information concerning the spread of influenza and vaccinations on its website. In December 2017, a collaboration was made with a popular series “Attack on Titan” to educate people on “cough etiquette”. Efforts will continue to be made to implement influenza measures from various viewpoints.

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Ensuring drug and food safety

Our Mission

The Pharmaceutical Safety and Environmental Health Bureau ensures the quality, efficacy, and safety of drugs/medical devices, etc. marketed in Japan through application reviews and safety measures, etc. so that people can use them without any undue worries. Through these efforts, the Bureau contributes to the realization of extended "healthy life expectancy" with provision of high quality medical care. The Pharmaceutical Safety and Environmental Health Bureau is working to make our lives safer and more hygienic through formulation of food standards, supervision/guidance, improvement of environmental health, and the provision of safe tap water, etc.

Ensuring drug safety

Through application reviews and safety measures, etc., the Bureau ensures the quality, efficacy, and safety of drugs marketed in Japan so that people can use them every day without any undue worries.

Ensuring food safety

Food safety in Japan is ensured by flexibly responding to progress in food-related science and technology, globalization of food distribution, and diversification of dietary habits, etc.

Ensuring safe tap water

In addition to operation of water supply related systems such as business licenses of water supply services and formulation of water supply quality standards, etc. and provision of financial support for making water supply facilities earthquake-resistant, etc., the Bureau handles damages from water supply disruption in times of disaster.

Ensuring safety of medical devices/regenerative medical products

Through application/ certification reviews and safety measures, etc., the Bureau ensures the quality, efficacy, and safety of various medical products with a broad range of properties and forms, including medical devices, in-vitro diagnostics, regenerative medical products, etc.

Ensuring environmental health industries, etc.

In addition to hygiene regulations and promotion of environmental health industries, including qualification system for barbers/beauticians and approval system for hotels/inns, etc., the Bureau is also responsible for ensuring a healthy environment in buildings, etc.

Expansion of the pharmaceutical and medical device industry and progress in regenerative medicine technology is a part of the important pillars of the nation's growth strategy since the industry is recognized as knowledge-intensive and high-value-added, and Japan is at the forefront of regenerative medicine.

Japan used to have a problem of the drug and device lag, the time between when medications and devices are approved in foreign countries and when they are finally available in Japan. Thanks to the government efforts to speed up the approval process for drugs and medical devices, the problem is a thing of the past. Japan now promotes efforts to introduce new drugs and cutting-edge medical devices that will benefit patients before they are launched in other countries.

What is more, as robotic, artificial intelligence and genomic technologies are widely available and regenerative medicine technology advances, more and more companies are accelerating the development of new products that will push the envelope. In response to such trends, the Bureau is working to create an appropriate regulatory environment that enables manufacturers and pharmaceutical companies to develop safe and high-quality products and receive approval for them smoothly so that those products will become available in clinical practice as quickly as possible.

We continue to work with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) to promote and provide financial support for making water supply facilities earthquake-resistant infrastructure, etc. to medical sites ahead of any other country.

Our mission is to develop safe and high-quality products and receive approval for them smoothly so that those products will become available in clinical practice as quickly as possible.

Expansion of the pharmaceutical and medical device industry and progress in regenerative medicine technology is a part of the important pillars of the nation's growth strategy, since the industry is recognized as knowledge-intensive and high-value-added, and Japan is at the forefront of regenerative medicine.

With the rapid increase of foreign tourists and diversification of consumer needs, etc., so-called private lodging services are becoming popular at present. Taking into consideration such circumstances, the revised Inns and Hotels Act, which relaxes regulations on hotel business and strengthens control of illegal private lodgings, etc., was established in December 2017, and will be enforced at the same time as the New Private Lodging Business Act in June 2018. The Bureau will work on balancing hotel business and private lodgings and promote sound development of hotel business by controlling illegal private lodgings.
Protecting workers’ livelihoods, safety, and health

Our Mission
The mission of the Labour Standards Bureau is to protect people’s livelihoods, safety, and health from the viewpoints of workers. In order to do so, the Bureau aims to realize a society in which workers can work comfortably with a sense of security by establishing the minimum standards for working conditions and giving instructions to enterprises to comply with the standards as well as establishing the rules for setting working conditions and workers’ accident compensation insurance systems for emergency cases. In addition, the Bureau will carry out “work-style reform” by correcting long working hours and promoting diverse work styles, including sideline and subsidiary business, etc.

Ensuring minimum standards for working conditions

Minimum standards for working conditions, including minimum wages, working hours, and occupational safety and health, are stipulated in the Labour Standards Act, etc. “Labour Standards Inspectors” play the role of instructing enterprises to comply with these acts. The Inspectors are assigned at 325 Labour Standards Inspection Offices across Japan, and visit enterprises. If any violation is found, they request business owners to correct them promptly. In case of serious/vicious violations, the inspectors conduct investigations as criminal cases and send each case to the Public Prosecutor’s Office. Furthermore, a special team to eliminate excessive work (commonly known as “Kotaku”) was established in the Tokyo and Osaka Labour Bureaus to actively and efficiently respond to criminal cases of excessive work.

Through these efforts, the Ministry is working to realize a society in which the statutory working conditions are ensured and workers can live with a sense of security.

#04 Labour Standards Bureau

Policy

Promotion of efforts to prevent industrial accidents

The number of workers injured at work sites exceeds 110,000 and nearly 1,000 workers die annually. “Karoshi—death caused by overwork” due to long working hours, etc., “mental disorders” due to stress, and “occupational cancer” from chemical substances, etc. are just some examples of these accidents. In order to prevent such industrial accidents and protect safety and health of workers, the Bureau is working on measures that respond to the changes of the times. In FY2018, a new 5-year plan to advance these measures has commenced.

Promoting sideline and subsidiary business

While the number of people who wish to engage in sideline and subsidiary business has been increasing every year, many enterprises do not allow it. In order to develop an environment in which people wishing to broadly utilize their abilities or improve their skills and not to be limited to one company can engage in sideline and subsidiary business, the Bureau formulated guidelines compiling matters requiring attention for workers and enterprises. In addition, the model rules of employment (template presented by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare to be used as a reference in formulating the rules of employment) was revised to allow sideline and subsidiary business in principle.

Support for balancing medical treatment and work

With aging, the number of workers who continue to work while receiving treatment for diseases is expected to increase. Under such circumstances, the Bureau will work to change awareness of enterprises and develop a support system for balancing treatment and work in cooperation with relevant parties, including enterprises and medical institutions, etc. to achieve a society in which people can continue to work while receiving treatment for diseases.

Ensuring and improving working conditions

The Bureau establishes minimum standards concerning working hours, wages, and industrial safety and health, and is working to ensure that these minimum standards are followed nationwide. In addition, in order to ensure good labour relations between workers and their employers, the Bureau develops the rules for setting the working conditions, ensures the right of workers to organize, and provides dispute resolution support.

Workers’ accident compensation insurance system

Workers’ accident compensation insurance is a system for providing necessary compensation for injuries that workers suffer during work or commuting. In recent years, the number of applications for workers’ accident compensation insurance involving death from overwork, etc. has been increasing, and the Bureau is working to provide insurance benefits in a rapid and appropriate manner.

Hot Topics

■ Ensuring and improving working conditions
■ Ensuring workers’ safety and health
■ Workers’ accident compensation insurance system
■ Promoting sideline and subsidiary business
Realizing “work” in ways one likes

Our Mission

The environment surrounding “work” of people is significantly and rapidly changing, including a decreasing population, globalization, and advancement in ICT technologies, etc. The Bureau aims to achieve stable employment for workers and development of economy/society in Japan by taking measures for overall employment policies while responding to these changes through organizations/systems, including over 500 Hello Work offices nationwide and employment insurance systems, etc.

Fields under its jurisdiction

- Analyzing labour market/typing employment policies
- Operating employment insurance systems
- Employment support mainly through job placement

Bureau

Policy

01 Labour policies that respond to changes in industrial structure

In Japan, the usual practices of employing new graduates all at once and lifetime employment have long been adopted. While declining birthrate, aging population and changing industrial structure progress, however, it is important to improve the employment absorptive capacity and promote career change/employment into high value-added sectors for Japan to continue economic growth.

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will facilitate labour migration into growing industries by promoting efforts, including formulation of the “guidelines for expanding diverse selection/employment regardless of age”, subsidies for enterprises offering more mid-career employment, and “visualizing” of labour market by actively providing information on workplaces of enterprises that are comfortable to work for, etc.

02 Labour shortage measures

While the unemployment rate decreased significantly by improved employment situations, labour shortage is occurring in many sectors. Continued labour shortage can obstruct work-style reform and economic growth.

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare makes appropriate matches between enterprises and job seekers at over 500 Hello Work offices nationwide by making proposals to enterprises for job offer conditions that would get more applications and providing job seekers with job seeking advice, etc. In addition, the Ministry also implements comprehensive labour shortage measures such as working on job leave prevention by raising the amount of benefits during child/family care leave, etc.

03 Promotion of employment for persons with disabilities

Ensuring employment opportunities is essential for independence in modern society and is an important issue for persons with disabilities wishing to work to become independent or participate in society.

For enterprises, on the other hand, creating an environment in which persons with disabilities can play active roles not only enables them to secure a valuable labour force even with a decreasing population, but also leads to realizing workplaces in which various people, including women, the elderly, and, those receiving treatment for diseases, etc., can fully utilize their abilities.

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has been strengthening the system that obligates enterprises to employ persons with disabilities, developing systems in place to support enterprises and persons with disabilities, and planning effective taxation and subsidies. Employment measures for persons with disabilities serve as an important guide to realize the wishes of persons with disabilities and create work styles for the next generation.

Hot Topics

- Improving employment situation
- Hello Work for mothers - supporting job seekers with young children -

Trends in unemployment rate and effective ratio of job offers to applicants

For people, for life, for the future

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare Service Guide 2018
Toward society in which all people can play active roles and balance their work and life

Our Mission
In Japan, work-style reform is necessary, including labour participation of women, balancing work and child/family care, etc., improvement of employment environment for non-regular workers such as part-timers and fixed-term contract workers, and promotion of flexible work styles such as telework. The Employment Environment and Equal Employment Bureau have been working to resolve these issues.

Fields under its jurisdiction

- Creating an environment in which both men and women can utilize their abilities.
  The Bureau has been working to facilitate efforts of enterprises to promote more active roles of women, create workplace environments in which no one is discriminated against on the basis of sex, and create work environments in which both men and women can comfortably work through measures to prevent sexual harassment, harassment on the basis of pregnancy/chilbirth, and power harassment in the workplace.

- Work-life balance
  In order to develop an environment in which work and child/family care can be easily balanced, the Bureau has been making efforts to encourage workers to take various leaves, including child care leave and family care leave, etc.

- Developing environments for diverse work styles
  The Bureau is promoting efforts to improve labour conditions of non-regular workers, including part-timers and fixed-term contract workers, etc., and enable them to become regular workers. In addition, the Bureau is also working to develop guidelines for appropriate implementation of telework.

- Realizing an affluent working life
  The Bureau promotes efforts to realize an affluent working life, including improvement of retirement allowance of small and medium-sized enterprises, etc.

Hot Topics

- Telework
  Telework refers to a flexible work style that enables effective use of time and place by utilizing ICT (information and communication technologies). Telework can be a mechanism for balancing child/family care and work, contributing to the realization of work-life balance, and enabling individuals of diverse skills and backgrounds to demonstrate their abilities.

- Measures against workplace power harassment
  The number of cases of consultations to the Labour Bureau concerning "bullying/harassment" in workplaces is increasing every year, requiring the measures to be strengthened.
  For this reason, review meetings consisting of experts and representatives from workers and employers have been held on power harassment (any conduct directed toward a person working at the same workplace, based on occupational rank and human relationships, etc., which inflicts mental/physical pain on him/her or makes his/her work environment worse) in workplaces since May 2017 to understand the actual situations and issues and discuss effective preventive measures.

Policy

01 Toward improving labour conditions of non-regular workers

The government promotes “work-style reform” as the biggest challenge to realizing dynamic engagement of all citizens. The measure that is positioned as one of the main pillars is elimination of irrational gap between non-regular workers, which account for approximately 40% of all workers, and regular workers. The Bureau aims to develop provisions to eliminate irrational gap in labour conditions and revise laws to enhance the obligation of explanation about treatment of workers. Through these efforts, the Bureau aims to realize work styles that enable workers to be treated with their consent no matter what kind of work style they choose.

02 Promotion of more active roles for women

At present, almost 50% of all employees in Japan are women, but the percentage of women in the decision-making positions remains low at around 10%.

For this reason, the Bureau supports efforts of the respective enterprises (formulation of action plans, etc.) and promotes certification systems (Eruboshi, Kurumin, etc.) based on the Act on Promotion of Women’s Participation and Advancement in the Workplace and the Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children. Furthermore, the Bureau promotes efforts of enterprises for more active roles of women by providing a database of information on active roles of women in the respective enterprises that can be accessed using smartphones, etc.

In addition, measures to prevent sexual harassment and harassment related to pregnancy/chilbirth/child care leave/family care leave, etc. are promoted.

03 Work-life balance support

While approximately 50% of women leave their jobs before or after giving birth to their first child, the percentage of men who took child care leave remains quite low at around 3%.

In order to develop an environment in which both men and women can have a good balance between work and child/family care and continue to work, the Bureau promotes the use of childcare leave and systems for working reduced hours, etc., and provides support to, and raises awareness of, enterprises.

In addition, the Bureau promotes the development of an environment in which employees can easily take annual paid leave, etc. by providing examples of improving ways to work and take leave.
For the children who will create the future

Our Mission

Children are the hope of society and the strength of the future. Supporting growth of children and childcare not only leads to the happiness of each individual child and his/her family, but also is an investment for the future to foster future leaders of Japan where the declining birthrate is progressing. The Bureau is working to enhance support for children and childcare, aiming toward a society in which all children can grow healthily, the “best interest for children” is achieved, and people’s wishes for building a family, having children, and raising them are realized.

Fields under its jurisdiction

Enhancement of day care and childcare support services
In order to create an environment in which people can raise their children without undue worries, the Bureau is working to quantitatively enhance childcare support services such as day care centers, after-school children’s clubs, and community childcare support bases, etc., develop and secure human resources for these services, and improve quality of day care and other services.

Child abuse prevention and social care
The Bureau promotes a series of measures in a comprehensive manner, including preventing the occurrence of child abuse, early detection, prompt/appropriate handling of child protection, etc., and when it is difficult to raise children at home, raising them by foster parents, foster homes, or child adoption or providing independence support, etc.

Seamless support throughout the period of pregnancy/child birth/child-rearing
The Bureau protects physical and mental health of parents and children during the period of pregnancy/child birth/child-rearing by promoting maternal and child health services such as prenatal checkup and health checkups for infants, consultation support at Child-rearing Generation Comprehensive Support Centers, postnatal care, and subsidies for fertility treatment, etc.

Support for single-parent families
In order to enable children of single-parent families to grow healthily with hope for the future, the Bureau is promoting employment support for their parents such as support for obtaining qualifications, child education support, financial support such as child-rearing allowance, child and childcare support, and comprehensive independence support, including securing child care expenses and support for visitation or contacts, etc.

Policy

01 Elimination of wait-listed children
While women are playing more active roles in the workplace, and day care needs are increasing, the Bureau has been promoting the development of day care centers. However, the employment rate of women is expected to continue to increase and, accordingly, those wishing to use day care services are also expected to increase.

With a strong determination to “finally put an end to the issue of wait-listed children”, the Bureau aims to eliminate wait-listed children by the end of FY2020 by developing day care centers for 320,000 children, which will be sufficient even when the employment rate of women reaches 80%.

In addition, the Bureau is making the utmost efforts in securing the “quality of day care services” and improving treatment of those engaged in day care services to enable them to work with hope so that children can stay in day care centers with a sense of security.

Furthermore, the Bureau makes the utmost efforts toward a good balance between child care and work to create a society in which people can raise their children with a sense of security by providing close support for guardians by “day care concierge”, etc.

02 Promotion of social care
All children have the right to be respected for their healthy growth. In order to achieve this, supporting their growth at their homes as a society is important.

In Japan, there are approximately 45,000 children who cannot live with their family for various reasons such as being abused or having no guardian, etc., and many of them are living in a group in foster homes, etc. In order to enable these children to grow up in an environment that is warm and family-like as possible, the Bureau is working to improve facility environments and promote efforts to increase the number of foster parents and child adoption, which has not been fully utilized in Japan, etc.

In addition, the Bureau is also working to secure support systems, including consultation support for guardians troubled over child-rearing and temporary day-care services when it becomes difficult for them to raise children, etc.

03 Poverty alleviation measures for children to protect the future of Japan
The poverty of children who will lead the future of Japan has been an issue. We must avoid the situation where the future of these children depends on the financial situations of their families. In particular, providing support for single-parent households, in which one parent bears both the burdens of childcare and earning a living on their own, is an important theme. The Bureau is working to resolve this issue by making full use of various measures, including financial support and child education support, etc. through the “Sukusuku Support Project”.

Hot Topics

Free early childhood education/day-care services
Early childhood education/day-care services are the basis for developing lifetime characters of children, and therefore all children must be provided with opportunities to receive high quality education/day care services. The Bureau has been making efforts in making early childhood education/day-care services free of charge, and will endeavor to further accelerate its progress by utilizing the financial resources secured by raising the consumption tax rate to 10% in order to support child-rearing households and drastically transform social security guarantees into systems for all generations.

Foster parents/child adoption
Those who accept and raise children unable to live with their families in their homes at the request from child guidance centers are called “foster parents”.
In addition, creating a legal parent-child relationship between these children and those wishing to become new parents regardless of their blood relationship is called “child adoption”.
Both of them play important roles in providing child-rearing environments similar to homes.
Toward realizing a regionally cohesive society

Our Mission

The Bureau is working to promote broad social welfare efforts, including the development of a social welfare jurisdictional system and foundation of welfare by securing human resources to be engaged in welfare and providing support to people having difficulties making a living and persons with disabilities, etc., and as well as consolation and relief for bereaved families of the war dead.

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Policy

01 Support for people having difficulties making a living

In order to guarantee minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living to people, the Bureau is promptly providing support to people in need without fail with the public assistance system. In addition, with the support system for needy persons, comprehensive support that takes into consideration the entire life, including work, livelihood, and housing, etc., is provided to people having difficulties making a living. The Bureau will continue to provide various support so that all people can live independent lives.

02 Community life support for persons with disabilities

The Bureau provides community life support for persons with disabilities to enable people to live a life they wish even with disabilities. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has been improving welfare services for persons with disabilities such as in-home long-term care and employment support, etc., and the number of users of services and the amount of benefits provided have been increasing over the last 10 years. In order to further advance these efforts, laws were revised in 2016 to create a new service to support individual lives of persons with disabilities and their employment/retention at general enterprises. In addition, the severity of disabilities and aging of persons with disabilities is progressing. In the FY2018 medical fee revision (revision of the unit price of each service), a reform that responds to the needs of the times was made that established new group home types, etc., to support community lives of persons with severe disabilities. The Bureau will work to enhance measures so as to enable persons with disabilities to live active lives in their communities.

03 Recovering the remains of the war dead and holding memorial ceremonies

Approximately 3.1 million people died in the World Wars. Among them, approximately 2.4 million people died overseas, and many remains are still unrecovered. It is the national responsibility to recover the remains of the war dead. While bereaved families of the war dead are aging, focused efforts are therefore being made so that as many remains as possible can be returned to Japan at the earliest possible date. The Memorial Ceremony for the War Dead has been held annually on August 15, which is attended by the Emperor and Empress, to console the souls of the dead from the World Wars and wish for the peace.

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Hot Topics

#08 Social Welfare and War Victims’ Relief Bureau

Toward resolving various life issues that individuals and households have, the Bureau promotes the development of a comprehensive support system for realizing a “a regionally cohesive society” in which community members support each other to create individual lives, purposes of life, and a community.

Field under its jurisdiction

- Realizing a regionally cohesive society
  - Toward resolving various life issues that individuals and households have, the Bureau promotes the development of a comprehensive support system for realizing a “a regionally cohesive society” in which community members support each other to create individual lives, purposes of life, and a community.

- Developing social welfare foundations
  - The Bureau has been establishing systems for providing welfare services through the strengthening of governance/social discipline of management organizations of social welfare corporations and securing/developing welfare/long-term care human resources who will play important roles in an aging society in the future.

- Enhancement of various measures for persons with disabilities
  - The Bureau aims to realize a society in which persons with disabilities can live with a sense of security in their communities. The Bureau is working on system reform by promoting the provision of welfare services for persons with disabilities such as in-home long-term care and employment support, etc. and psychiatric care.

- Integrated revision of the support system for needy persons and the public assistance system
  - In recent years, with the increase of single-person households, progressive aging, and weakened relationships with local communities, etc., while the number of public assistance recipients is decreasing, the number of elderly public assistance recipients is increasing, and thus the need for various types of support for needy persons is expected to increase. Taking into consideration these circumstances, in order to further promote independence of people having difficulties making a living, including support at a stage before receiving public assistance, the Bureau is working to strengthen comprehensive support systems for needy persons and provide children of households receiving public assistance with support for going on to universities, etc.
Realizing long-term care in familiar environments

Our Mission

While Japan is experiencing an unprecedented super aging society, the Health and Welfare Bureau for the Elderly promotes long-term care and welfare measures for older people including long-term care insurance system, in order to ensure that older people can continue to live in the communities they have lived in for a long time.

Fields under its jurisdiction

- Operating long-term care insurance system

With the aim of creating a society in which people can continue to live in ways they like in their local communities even if they need medical/long-term care, the Bureau promotes to establish “Community-based Integrated Care System”, which combines health care, long-term care, preventive long-term care, housing, and livelihood support services, by 2025 when all of the so-called baby boomer generation turns 75 or older. More concretely, the Bureau is flexibly dealing with various long-term care needs of older people by the revision of the Long-Term Care Insurance Act, etc. to provide essential long-term care insurance services for long-term care for older people such as home-visit care and outpatient day long-term care, etc.

In addition, the Bureau is responsible for the revision of long-term care fees, which determines the price of long-term care insurance services, and revises them every three years in principle. In recent years, the Long-Term Care Insurance Act was revised in FY2017, and the long-term care fee revision was made in FY2018.

- Support for insurers (municipalities), etc.

Municipalities are the insurers of the long-term care insurance system. Each municipality and prefecture is to formulate the Long-Term Care Insurance Business Plan (1st term of the three-year plan), which estimates the amount of necessary services, and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare provides support by formulating the guidelines that will be the basis for this Plan.

- Promotion of preventive long-term care

Various long-term care prevention services have been provided according to the actual situations of the regions in each municipality to enable older people to continue to live independent daily lives, and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has been promoting nationwide expansion of effective preventive long-term care efforts through presentation of good practices.

Policy

01 Realizing a condition such that “no one will be forced to leave his/her job for long-term care”

With the aim of realizing a condition such that “no one will be forced to leave his/her job for long-term care”, which comprises one of the three new points of Abenomics, the Bureau has been making comprehensive efforts in securing approximately 250,000 long-term care professionals by promoting pre-employment “introductory training” in the field of long-term care in cooperation between the government and the private sectors. In addition, in order to eliminate the wage differential between the occupation of long-term care and other industries as part of the “revolution in human resource development”, a whole government effort to promote investment in human resources, the Bureau is working to promote improvement of treatment of long-term care professionals and secure long-term care professionals.

02 “Revolution in productivity” in the field of long-term care

Improving the productivity in the field of long-term care is an important issue, and the Bureau supports introduction of nursing-care robots and utilization of ICT. Nursing-care robots are expected to improve the quality of long-term care and reduce the physical burdens of those engaged in long-term care, and the Bureau supports introduction of nursing-care robots that can support such areas as transferring and exertion, etc. In addition, from the point of view of improving the productivity of long-term care establishments, ICT utilization in creating/retaining long-term care records, etc. has been promoted.

03 National strategy on dementia

In Japan, it is predicted that approximately one in five older adults aged 65 or older (approximately 7 million people) will suffer from dementia in 2025. Dementia is a common disease in Japan today that anyone can be concerned with, and it is also of high international concern.

The Bureau promotes discussions on measures through the exchange of opinions with high-level government officials of other countries.

In January 2016, 12 relevant ministries and agencies cooperated to formulate the “New Orange Plan”, a comprehensive strategy to accelerate dementia measures, and it was partially revised in July 2017. Based on the New Orange Plan, the Bureau promotes the development of an environment in which people with dementia and their families can comfortably live through such measures as increasing the number of “dementia supporters” who have proper knowledge on dementia to support people with dementia and their families, as well as promoting “dementia cafes” where people can exchange information and gain mutual understanding.

Hot Topics

- Holding Nenrinpics

National Health and Welfare Festival (nickname: Nenrinpics) is a multifaceted event on health and welfare, including sports and cultural exchange games. It has been held annually since 1988, jointly hosted by the Health and Welfare Bureau for the Elderly and local prefectures. It was held in Akita Prefecture in 2017 (30th game), and the next game is scheduled to be held in Toyama Prefecture in 2018 (31st game).

- Position of Japan’s long-term care insurance system in the world

Japan has drawn significant international attention regarding how to overcome an unprecedented aging society unlike any other in the world, how the long-term care insurance system functions to do it, and what roles the system plays.

In addition to directly presenting the long-term care insurance system of Japan to important persons who have visited from overseas, the Bureau presents the efforts and experiences of Japan at the international conferences such as the Triilateral Policy Dialogue on Aging among Japan, China and the Republic of Korea, etc.
Policy

01 Establishing sustainable health insurance systems

In Japan, everyone subscribes to one of the public health insurance systems and can receive high-quality medical care with low burden using an insurance certificate. In recent years, with the increase in medical expenditure due to the progress of aging and advances in medical services, etc., maintaining the health insurance systems that protect a sense of security in our daily life has been an important issue. For this reason, the Bureau has been working to revise the benefits and burdens of the systems from the point of view of carrying out a reform that improves the sustainability of the systems as well as promoting a fair balance in burdens between and within generations and requiring the burdens to be according to the bearing capacity. In FY2018, a new mechanism in which prefectures become the responsible bodies for the financial operation has been started to ensure stable operation of the National Health Insurance. The Bureau will ensure that all people can receive necessary medical care without undue worries by protecting the universal health insurance system.

02 Realizing medical care services according to social needs with medical fees

The medical fees are the remunerations that health insurance-covered medical institutions and pharmacies receive for providing insurance-covered medical services, and are applied nationwide utilizing a point system in which one point is calculated as 10 yen. You must have seen the description of “first visita/visit fee x points” on the receipt you received from a hospital. The medical fees are determined once every two years by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare taking into consideration the discussions at the Central Social Insurance Medical Council. The number of medical fee points set supports the currently requested quality and quantitative improvement of medical services, and the discussion on setting the medical fee for each service actually determines the direction of medical care services.

03 Promoting disease prevention/health promotion to optimize medical expenditure

In order to make the health insurance system sustainable, how to promote the optimization of the medical expenditure is important, and accordingly it is important that everyone stays healthy and progress of diseases is prevented. The Bureau promotes disease prevention/health promotion as a united effort with relevant parties through utilization of ICT technologies. For instance, the Bureau promotes the “data health reform” under which medical-long-term care-related data such as receipts and health checkup information, etc. are collected/analyzed and the results are utilized in disease prevention/health promotion. In addition, the Bureau promotes “visualization” of implementation status of the efforts and “horizontal expansion” of advanced cases with the “Nippon Kenko Kaigi (Japan Health Conference)” established in cooperation between private organizations, such as economic organizations, medical care organizations, and medical insurers, municipalities, and the government, for example, setting joint targets for disease prevention/health promotion and making concerted efforts toward achieving them, etc.

Protecting the universal health insurance system and handing over a sense of security in our daily life to the next generation

Our Mission

Under the universal health insurance system, anyone can receive medical care he/she needs anytime at any medical institution through the use of an insurance certificate. Japan achieved a universal health insurance system in 1961 and since then realized the world’s highest level of average life expectancy and health/medical standards. The Bureau will continue to promote the efforts day by day to enable all people to receive necessary medical care without undue worries.

Fields under its jurisdiction

- Employees’ insurance
  The Bureau is responsible for planning and designing of the health insurance such as “Japan Health Insurance Association-managed Health Insurance” and “society-managed Health Insurance”, which corporate employees subscribe to.

- Medical care system for older people 75 and over
  The Bureau is responsible for planning and designing of the medical care system for older people aged 75 and over.

- Disease prevention/health promotion
  The Bureau promotes the efforts to prevent the onset and progression of lifestyle disease by analyzing big data on medical care and implementing specific health checkups, etc.

- National health insurance
  The Bureau is responsible for planning and designing of the national health insurance, which people not subscribing to employees’ insurance such as self-employed persons and those engaged in agriculture subscribe to.

- Medical fees/prices of drugs, etc.
  The Bureau is responsible for planning and designing of the medical fees, which are the remunerations that health insurance-covered medical institutions and pharmacies receive for providing services, and the prices of drugs/medical devices, etc.

- Medical and long-term care integration
  The Bureau promotes measures to strengthen medical and long-term care integration, etc. to ensure the provision of comprehensive medical and long-term care in communities.

Hot Topics

- Stabilizing the national health insurance system
  The national health insurance system, which is the basis of the universal health insurance system, had structural issues such that the age distribution of subscribers tended to be directed toward older age and, accordingly, the medical fee level was high, and many insurers were of small-scale with a high risk of unstable financial operation, etc.

- FY2018 medical fee revision/National Health Insurance Drug Price System reform
  In order to stabilize the system, in addition to expanding financial support of the government, a reform under which medical fee revision and the long-term care fee revision take place at the same time, which comes once every six years. Toward the year 2025 in which the so-called baby boomer generation turns 75, a reform was carried out after over a year of discussions to establish an efficient and high-quality medical-long-term care system. For example, for home medical care and home-visit nursing for which social demand is increasing, the fees were revised to ensure that high-quality medical care is provided. In addition, a fundamental reform of the National Health Insurance Drug Price System was carried out to achieve the reduction of national burden and improvement in the quality of medical care.

- Preventing Aggravation of Diabetic Nephropathy
  The Bureau promotes measures to prevent the disease by identifying high-risk individuals and promoting the effort nationwide.

- Establishing the Program for Preventing Aggravation of Cataract
  The Bureau promotes the effort to prevent the disease by identifying high-risk individuals and promoting the effort nationwide.

- Stabilizing the national health insurance system
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Continuing “intergenerational support” for the next 100 years

Our Mission

Pension is the main pillar in people’s post-retirement life. While the declining birthrate and aging population is rapidly progressing, the Pension Bureau is working to establish a pension system that is sustainable in the future and in which people can have a sense of security and smoothly provide pension benefits, etc. in cooperation with the Japan Pension Service.

Fields under its jurisdiction

- Public pension
  - Public pension is a system for “intergenerational support” to appropriate insurance premiums paid by working generations to the payment of pension benefits to the elderly at the time. In addition, pension benefits are also provided when a person is disabled by a traffic accident, etc., or the main breadwinner of the family dies, pension benefits are paid to the person concerned or the bereaved family.

- Operation of pension reserves
  - The pension reserve of approximately 160 trillion yen is an important financial resource for future pension benefits. The operation of the pension reserve is safely and efficiently carried out by the Government Pension Investment Fund (GPIF).

- Operation of public pension
  - In order to operate the public pension system that is trusted by the people, the Bureau carries out the actual management work such as providing pensions, maintaining records, and collecting premiums, etc. in cooperation with the Japan Pension Service.

- Private pension
  - Private pension is a system to support voluntary efforts of enterprises and individuals to enable people to live more comfortable post-retirement lives in combination with the public pension. Typical private pension includes defined-benefit pension plan and defined contribution pension plan.

- Social security agreements
  - With the progress of globalization, the number of Japanese working overseas, and foreign nationals visiting Japan from overseas to work, is increasing. In order to prevent them from paying pension contributions in both Japan and their respective foreign countries, the Bureau is promoting the conclusion of social security agreements.

Policy

01 Balancing “sustainability” and “sufficiency of benefits”

Public pension is the main pillar in people’s post-retirement life. The Pension Bureau has been addressing the difficult issue of securing the “sufficiency of benefits” and at the same time improving the sustainability of the system while declining birthrate and aging are rapidly progressing. In 2004, as the insurance premium burden of the actively working generation was expected to be excessive in the future, a drastic reform was carried out to introduce a new framework in which the upper limit for increasing insurance premiums is fixed and the benefit level is automatically adjusted within the limit of financial resources. Increasing insurance premiums has already been stopped in September 2017, reaching the upper limit, and the Bureau will now address the issue of how to secure the benefit level within the limit of financial resources.

02 Supporting individual life plans

Private pensions (personal pensions/corporate pensions), which are provided in addition to public pension, are available as systems to support life in old age. For example, iDeCo (personally defined contribution pension plan) is one of those individuals can subscribe to on a voluntary basis and select the amount of premiums and investment method. Preferential tax treatment is available for the premiums and investment profits of iDeCo, and therefore not only those in old age but also those of the active generation can enjoy the benefits. It was revised in January 2017 to allow basically anyone to subscribe to the plan, and the number of subscribers increased almost 2.4 times in one year. In addition, support measures for small and medium-sized enterprises are taken to enable enterprises of any size to implement corporate pension plans. The Bureau will continue to support voluntary efforts for individual life plans in old age.

- “Nenkin Net” (Pension Net)
  - Public pension is a system on which life in old age is based, and checking the pension records is important for designing future plans. “Nenkin Net” can be used on a PC or smartphone to check the up-to-date pension records and estimated amount of future pension benefits, create some written notifications to be submitted to the Japan Pension Service such as an application form for special exemption of pension payment for students, and check/download various notifications such as “pension benefit payment notice”, etc.
  - The Bureau will continue to promote dissemination and publicity of “Nenkin Net” as a useful tool for checking records such as pension contribution payment status, etc.

Financial inspection

The pension system is closely related to developments in social and economic environments such as population, wages, and investment yield of pension reserves, etc. A mechanism for checking the pension finance from the point of view of “whether the financial resources for benefits will be exhausted in the future” and “whether the pension level will become too low in the future” by anticipating the next 100 years or so based on the most recent social and economic situations is called “financial inspection”. Financial inspection is performed at least once every five years and the results will be made available to the public. The next financial inspection is scheduled to take place by 2019.

Hot Topics

- Pension
  - Pension
  - Pension
  - Pension

- Fields under its jurisdiction
  - Public pension
  - Operation of pension reserves
  - Operation of public pension

- Private pension
  - Social security agreements

- Policy
  - Balancing “sustainability” and “sufficiency of benefits”
  - Supporting individual life plans

- “Nenkin Net” (Pension Net)

- Financial inspection

- Hot Topics
#12 Development of Human Resources

**Director-General for Human Resources Development**

**Our Mission**
Designing one's own working life and acquiring skills and knowledge. The Bureau aims to realize a society in which all people can utilize their abilities and actively work by closely supporting workers’ challenges for the future through the development/improvement of vocational abilities.

### Fields under its jurisdiction

- **Implementation of Hello Training (public vocational training)**
  For those seeking re-employment, those willing to acquire skills at workplaces, and persons with disabilities, etc., the Bureau implements Hello Training for re-employment and skills development to provide training opportunities as a safety net for employment and provides small and medium-sized enterprises, etc. with support.

- **Support for human resource development by enterprises**
  The Bureau provides support to enterprises that are making efforts in human resource development through subsidies (human resource development promotion subsidy and accredited vocational training systems) for the costs of training conducted for their employees, etc.

- **Technical cooperation with developing countries**
  The Bureau contributes to the development of worker's skills for those who are expected to play roles in economic growth in developing countries by temporarily accepting foreigners from developing countries, etc. in Japan to participate in the Technical Intern Training Program in which trade skills are transferred through on-the-job-training, etc.

- **Support for voluntary career development for individuals/employment support for young people**
  Voluntary career development by individuals is supported through the promotion job cards that can be utilized for designing future worker and demonstrating vocational abilities and provision of training and education benefits that subsidize part of the training costs of courses that workers take, etc. In addition, the Bureau is working to provide close employment support to secure stable employment for young people.

- **Vocational skills evaluations and skills promotion**
  The Bureau is working on the development of a framework in which abilities of individuals can be objectively evaluated by promoting trade skills tests implemented by the government and prefectures and certification systems of each enterprise/industry, and skills promotion through skills competitions.

### Hot Topics

- **Support for career/skills development of workers**
  In response to technological innovations and changes in social and economic circumstances, support for voluntary career development for individuals and re-education support for working adults are important for enabling workers to fully utilize their abilities.

  For this reason, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is working to improve both quality and quantity of courses subject to training and education benefits, provide career consultations (offering guidance/advice on making career choices and designing work-life plans), and promote the utilization of job cards.

  In addition, "recurring education" was identified as a theme at the "Council for Designing 100-year Life Society" established in September 2017 to promote the "revolution in human resource development" in anticipation of an era of a 100-year life span, and the Bureau will work to further strengthen human resource development measures toward the development of an environment in which people can receive re-education regardless of their age.

### Policy

**01 Enhancement of Hello Training toward employment and skills development**

The Bureau is working to implement effective Hello Training in cooperation with prefectures and private education/training institutions, etc. to provide various types of training according to the human resource needs of industries and regions. In particular, the Bureau is working to promote long-term training courses for one to two years to lead non-regular employees to stable employment by acquiring national qualifications, etc. and enhance training courses toward re-employment for women raising children.

In addition, for workers, Hello Training has been implemented to improve specialized knowledge and technologies required in their work to provide support for improving productivity and skills/technologies at enterprises.

Furthermore, the Bureau actively publicizes public vocational training to raise its public recognition and facilitate its use by those really in need through utilization of the nickname/catch phrase "Hello Training - steady learning wins the race - " and the logo of "Hallotore-kun".

**02 Employment support for young people**

In order to secure stable employment for young people, the Bureau provides close employment support at Hello Work for New Graduates and Hello Work for Young People, etc. In addition, based on the Youth Employment Measures Act, the Bureau promotes development of an environment in which young people can make appropriate career choices in employment, which is a significant turning point in their life, and find workplaces where they fully utilize their abilities.

As for support for unemployed youth, etc., in addition to providing specialized consultation support according to the individual situations at “Regional Youth Support Stations” in collaboration with local governments, development has commenced for effective support methods toward vocational independence of unemployed persons of this job-finding stagnated period.

**03 National Trade Skills Test and promotion of skills**

National Trade Skills Test is a national certification program for evaluating the levels of skills necessary for work in approximately 130 job categories, including machining, carpentry, and financial planning, etc. The Bureau provides support for students and young people to improve their skills with a goal.

In addition, efforts are being made in improving skill levels and promoting skills through National Skills Competition in which young people who will lead manufacturing of the next generation compete at their "skills" for national championship and “Award for Outstandingly Skilled Workers (Great Craftsmen in the present world)” program, which grants awards to outstandingly skilled workers who are regarded as the leading experts in their fields. The Bureau will make the utmost efforts in the bidding activities to host the 2023 WorldSkills Competition in Aichi Prefecture, Japan and work to develop national respect for skills, etc.
Creating the grand design and future image of social security/labour policies

**Our Mission**
The Director-General plays the role of a control center of social security policies within the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and creates the grand design and future image of policies, taking into consideration changes in social and economic situations, including declining birthrate, aging population, decreasing population, and technological innovations, etc.

**Policy**

**01 Creating the grand design of policies**

The Director-General plays the role of a control center for optimizing the respective systems of medical care, long-term care, pension, child rearing, welfare, and employment/labour that support people’s lives as well as for planning social security system reform and work-style reform and promoting reforms in anticipation of changes in social and economic situations in the future, including declining birthrate, aging population, decreasing population, diversification of individual work styles, life styles, and family structures, financial conditions, etc. and in consideration of the medium- to long-term directions of social security/labour policies.

**02 Responses to new issues**

The Director-General promotes discussions with academics and experts on the impacts of new technologies such as AI on employment and work styles and the responses. In addition, the Director-General promotes work-style reform through not only regulation, but also “visualization” techniques by launching a website on which anyone can view the information on the comfortability of working at individual enterprises, including working hours and the rate of taking paid leaves, etc.

**03 Think tank functions of social security/labour policies**

In order to deepen understanding of the actual situation of society, including vital events, employment, and enterprises and provide information on the current circumstances involved in the administration of health, labour, and welfare, the Director-General has created and published "Annual Health, Labour and Welfare Report" and "White Paper on the Labour Economy". “Annual Health, Labour and Welfare Report” presents the future prospects for administration of health, labour, and welfare, and the direction of measures, and “White Paper on the Labour Economy” provides economic analysis of the current issues on “working” by utilizing statistical data. In addition, utilization of statistical data and studies with intellectuals of the respective industries have been promoted on people’s income and living status, relationship between growth and distribution, and verification of social security functions, etc.

**04 Whole government response to important issues**

At present most of the most important measures of the government, including “dynamic engagement of all citizens”, “work-style reform”, “designing a 100-year life society”, and “revolution in productivity”, require policy tools of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) such as social security/labour policies. The Director-General has been considering how the vertical segmentation within the Ministry and between ministries/agencies can be eliminated to enable utilization of policy resources of the MHLW for resolving the issues of the whole nation and promoting the policies. In addition, the Director-General promotes such efforts as regulatory reform, national strategic special zones, decentralization of authority, regional revitalization, and tax system reform, etc. in health, labour, and welfare administration, and works on effective and efficient implementation of whole health, labour, and welfare administration by performing policy evaluation of all MHLW policies.

**Hot Topics**

**Impacts of technological innovations on labour**

It is necessary to discuss what impacts technological innovations such as AI and IoT have on working and what measures need to be taken from medium- and long-term perspectives. The Director-General therefore makes analysis on the promotion of innovations in the

[Image of social security benefits and burdens]

A. Social security that supports people’s entire lives

[Image of a follow-up meeting of "Japan’s Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens"]

A. At a follow-up meeting of "Japan’s Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens"

**Resolving social issues through public and private sector collaboration**

With the aim of developing new public and private sector collaboration methods such as social impact bond, model businesses in various fields such as “health promotion”, “child welfare”, “support for needy persons”, and “local community creation” have been implemented in 10 regions nationwide. For instance, the Director-General is working to prevent transfer to dialysis through recommendations to receive health checkups by utilizing Ai and receipt data and provide outreach type step-up support toward employment to stay-at-home young people, etc.

[Image of a White Paper on the Labour Economy and promotes discussions with AI experts and experts in legal practice, etc. at the Basic Sub-committee on Labour Reform Measures of the Labour Policy Council.]

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experts in Japan, etc. participated, active September 2017 in which WHO officials and health ministries of WHO Member States were in October 2016 to which delegates of the At the “ICD-11 Revision Conference” held Diseases (ICD) toward its eleventh revision. The WHO is currently carrying out a drastic Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is also working toward smooth allowed in administrative procedures of local governments, etc. The omission of attached documents by utilizing the My Number system is ICT infrastructures which allows people to feel the advantages of use/utilization of big data collected by each system and development of promotes, as part of data health reform, the efforts such as utilization in the fields of health/medical care/long-term care is a Organization), the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and promote international comparison of statistical data and manage international statistical classifications in cooperation with international organizations such as the WHO (World Health Organization), the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), etc. In order to promote evidence-based policy making (EBPM), understanding actual conditions and active utilization of statistical data, etc. are essential. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare conducts large-scale national surveys on vital events, households, medical care, social welfare, employment of workers, wages, and working hours and is working to make international comparison of statistical data and manages international statistical classifications in cooperation with international organizations such as the WHO (World Health Organization), the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), etc. While declining birthrate and aging population are progressing, ICT utilization in the fields of health/medical care/long-term care is a mechanism to respond to issues that Japan has such as extending healthy life expectancies and ensuring the sustainability of the social security system, etc. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare promotes, as part of data health reform, the efforts such as use/utilization of big data collected by each system and development of ICT infrastructures which allows people to feel the advantages of deploying the latest technologies, etc. In addition, the My Number system is expected to improve the fairness/transparency/efficiency of the social security and tax systems and simplify administrative procedures. From November 2017, omission of attached documents by utilizing the My Number system is allowed in administrative procedures of local governments, etc. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is also working toward smooth enforcement of the system. The WHO is currently carrying out a drastic review of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) toward its eleventh revision. 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Minister's Secretariat

International Affairs Division

 Fields under its jurisdiction

- Participation in international organizations

The Division is contributing to discussions on measures against infectious diseases such as Ebola virus disease, promotion of decent work and the ensuring of international labour standards, and analysis and ideals of health and labour policies through the WHO (World Health Organization), the ILO (International Labour Organization) and the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), etc.

- Technical support for developing countries

In order to support human resource development and system establishment, etc. in developing countries, the Division dispatches officials of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare to technical cooperation programs implemented by JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), holds policy cooperation dialogues with high-level government officials of ASEAN countries, and contributes to support projects implemented by the ILO, etc.

- Promotion of economic partnership

The Division is working on the promotion of economic partnership/ bilateral cooperation in the fields of drugs/medicinal devices, food sanitation, and labour, etc. through the frameworks of EPAs/bilateral consultations and measures concerning smooth acceptance of nursing/care worker candidates based on EPAs.

- Collection of overseas information

The Division collects information on overseas systems and advanced efforts. In addition, information on Japanese policies is provided to foreigners living in Japan, overseas government officials, and researchers, etc. through the English website, etc.

- Promotion of policy coordination

The Division promotes policy coordination with foreign countries through frameworks such as G7, G20, ASEAN+3 (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations with Japan, China, and Korea), etc. In addition, in order to globally spread the knowledge of Japan gained in an aging society with a declining birthrate, exchange programs (symposiums) have been conducted and MOCs (Memorandums of Cooperation) concluded with Germany, France, northern European countries, etc.

Policy

01 Contribution to issues in the field of global health

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare contributes to international society through the sharing of Japanese knowledge and provision of financial and human resource support to address issues in the field of global health such as (1) establishment of a system by which all countries in the world collectively respond to public health risks such as Ebola virus disease; (2) achievement of universal health coverage (UHC) to ensure access to basic health services by all people; and (3) measures for antimicrobial resistance (AMR) for which antibiotics are not effective, among others.

02 Efforts for future work

With the progress of globalization and technological innovations, development of labour environments that comply with international standards has become an important issue for all countries today. For this reason, global and domestic dialogues are essential.

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has been having dialogues with workers, employers, and intellectuals on future work styles. The Division is making contributions to policy coordination with other countries and the ILO’s Future of Work Initiative by presenting the results and experience at G7/G20 (ministerial conferences) and conferences of international organizations such as the ILO, etc.

- Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

The achievement of UHC has been included in the “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” adopted at the UN Summit in 2015. Strengthening health systems of not only developed countries, but also developing countries, is expected to improve health and medical care for lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and heart disease, etc. and strengthen the ability to respond to, and prepare, for global public health risks.

Japan, which achieved its universal health insurance system in 1961, has been taking the lead in this area. In December 2017, the Japanese government held the “UHC Forum 2017” in Tokyo jointly with the World Bank, the WHO, UNICEF, etc. and put together the "UHC Tokyo Declaration" for cooperation toward UHC promotion. Based on this Declaration, the Division will actively disseminate Japan’s knowledge to other countries.


Japan has concluded various EPAs (Economic Partnership Agreements), and some important agreements are also concluded in the areas of health, labour, and welfare. For example, Japan concluded agreements with the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam to accept nursing/care worker candidates. In recent years, negotiations of large-scale EPAs for coordinating the interests between multiple countries such as the TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership) and the Japan-EU EPA, and economic dialogue with the U.S., which has withdrawn from the TPP, have been conducted, and the areas of life sciences and foods, etc. have also been points at issue. Strengthening cooperation with other countries in economic activities is expected to contribute to the improvement of people’s daily lives and industrial revitalization in Japan.

- First meeting of Japan-US Economic Dialogue (Washington, D.C., USA)

Hot Topics

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General Coordination Division

As a control center for MHLW, the General Coordination Division overlooks the overall affairs of the Ministry and is responsible for appropriately reviewing the situations of the departments and bureaus and carrying out general coordination of all cases.

Moreover, the Division is responsible for contact and coordination with the Diet and respective ministries and agencies, and examines whether laws and regulations on which administrative activities are based are consistent with measures taken by MHLW and whether the rules of laws and regulations are followed, etc.

Personnel Division

The Personnel Division appropriately conducts personnel management, taking requests for future career and family environments of individual employees into consideration with the aim of building an environment in which they can work with ease. In particular, “work-style reform and reform on how to take leave” have been promoted to improve work-life balance of officials.

In addition, the Division is working to improve employees’ abilities by conducting training at the sites of health centers, welfare offices, and Labour Bureaux, etc. for those of a younger age.

Accounts Division

The Accounts Division is responsible for the coordination of budgets for the entire Ministry exceeding 30 trillion yen in budget requests made during the summer and budget compilations at the end of the year.

In addition, the Division is also responsible for settlement of accounts, audits, public procurements, management of administrative properties and government buildings, and welfare benefits of government employees, etc.

Regional Bureau Administration Division

As the front-line organizations for the health, labour, and welfare administration in regions, the Regional Bureau Administration Division provides comprehensive supervision and personnel/budgetary support to enable Regional Offices of Health and Welfare and Prefectural Labour Bureaux to fully display their abilities.