

Overview of the Act to Amend the Medical Care Act in Establishing a System that Provides High Quality Medical Care (revised in 2006)

In order to establish a system in which people's relief and trust in medical care is secured and high quality medical care services are provided, measures are being implemented in accordance with the "General Policies of Medical Care System Reform" compiled at a governmental and ruling party meeting held on a medical care system reformation on December 1, 2005, and includes the promotion of making medical care information available to patients, promotion of a division of roles and cooperation through reviewing the medical care plan system, and coping with issues like the shortage of doctors in certain regions and clinical areas.

I Overview

1. Promotion of making medical care information available to patients

[Support for patients in obtaining sufficient medical care information and making the decision on choosing the appropriate medical care.]

Establish a system in which prefectures collect information on medical care institutions, make that information available to people in an understandable manner, and provide appropriate consultations for residents [the Medical Care Act and Pharmaceutical Affairs Act]

Provide explanations of treatment plans using documents at the beginning/end of hospitalization

Expand matters that can be advertised through revision of advertisement regulations [the Medical Care Act, for above]

2. Promotion of a division of roles and cooperation through reviewing medical care plan system

[Review the medical care plan system in promoting a division of roles and cooperation through community-based critical cooperative paths so as to provide continued medical care.]

Improve in-home care to support returning home early.

Provide a concrete medical cooperation system for individual programs within medical care plans and including cerebral apoplexy, cancer, and pediatric emergency medical services.

○ Clarify understandable guidelines and numeric goals in medical care plans so that evaluations can be conducted afterwards [the Medical Care Act].

○ Establish regulations for promoting in-home medical care that includes adjustments made when leaving hospital [the Medical Care Act and the Pharmaceutical Affairs Act].

3. Coping with issues like the shortage of doctors in certain regions and clinical areas

[Improve measures to secure medical professionals, including doctors, to cope with the shortage of doctors in certain regions, including remote areas and certain clinical areas, and including pediatrics and obstetrics.]

Establish prefectural "medical care councils" and promote measures through discussions held between related entities.

Provide cooperative support for medical professionals in securing regional medical care [the Medical Care Act].

4. Securing medical safety

Establish medical safety support centers and obligate the establishment of a system for securing medical safety [the Medical Care Act]

Obligate the re-education of administratively punished doctors, dentists, pharmacists, and nurses and review the types of administrative punishments, etc available [the Medical Practitioners Act, the Dental Practitioners Act, the Pharmacists Act, the Act on Public Health Nurses, Midwives and Nurses].

5. Improving the quality of medical professionals

Obligate the re-education of administratively punished doctors, etc (as aforementioned).

Establish a provision for exclusive naming rights in addition to the existing provision for exclusive rights with the provision of nurse and midwife services, etc. [the Act on Public Health Nurses, Midwives and Nurses]

Include foreign nurses and emergency life guards as subjects of the clinical training system. [Clinical Training for Foreign Medical Doctors Act]

6. Reform of non-profit medical corporation system

[Aim for improved transparency and efficiency in medical managerial practices.]

Create a non-profit medical corporation system to take care of areas that were previously handled by public hospitals, etc.]

Improve non-profitability by limiting the ownership of residual assets in the event of dissolution.

Create a new type of non-profit medical corporation ("social medical corporation") that provides medical services in remote areas and emergency medical services for children as stipulated in the medical care plans, etc [the Medical Care Act].

7. Others

Review the purpose and structure of the entire current Medical Care Act, which has the characteristic of being more like a facility regulation law, so that it becomes more of a law for respecting patients' views.

Review the regulations on clinics with beds and other required revisions [the Medical Care Act].

II Date of Enforcement

I Basically on April 1, 2007

* January 1, 2007 for review of clinics with beds

* April 1, 2008 for obligating the re-education of pharmacists and nurses etc and review of the types of administrative punishments, etc.