



## Japan 2035

Leading the World  
through Health

# Japan 2035

## Leading the World through Health

A health care system built for the next 20 years and designed for all lifestyles and people – from children to older people, from patients to providers – where individuals feel secure and supported to make the life and work choices that are right for them.

Amidst rapid population ageing, advances in medical technology, and major shifts in health care, a health care system that contributes to financial stability while engaging each sector of society to support a nation of health and well-being, where each person is empowered to realize their full wellness potential.



## **Background**

2035 Japan brings growing health care needs, shifting social environments and values, increasing inequity, and globalization that require a health care system reformed to reflect shared vision and values. Relying on financial adjustments to maintain the current system will no longer suffice. Based on the recommendations presented here, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare should construct implementation means, engage the public in discussion, and take steadfast action on immediately feasible measures.

## **Goals**

Health care in 2035 should strive to deliver unmatched health outcomes through care that is secure and responsive to each member of society. This system should not only fit the public's image of what a health system should be, but be both sustainable and actively contribute to prosperity in Japan and around the world.

## **Paradigm shift**

The principles underlying today's health care system restrict its ability to intersect with and fully support social components that are critical to health, such as access to housing, community building, and employment. The health care system of the next 20 years requires a paradigm shift that allows it to transform into a multidisciplinary health network capable of safeguarding Japan's health in a new era. These changes will shift the spotlight from:

- Quantity to quality
- Inputs to Value
- Government regulation to autonomy
- Cure to care
- Fragmentation to integration

## **Key principles**

### 1. Fairness

We envision a health care system built for and with the support of all generations; a system that does not create or support health disparities due to differences in age, employment status, or family situation; and a system that evaluates health care on the value it provides to patients and society, not on the inputs it demands.

### 2. Solidarity built on autonomy

We envision a health care system that supports individuals to actively participate in their community; and a system that, rather than asking people to face challenges alone, provides an adequate safety net, and encourages proactive approaches in health care to ensure that each person has access to the benefits of wellness.

### 3. Shared prosperity for Japan and the world

We envision a health care system that fosters investment-based economic and social stability for Japan and the world; a system that leverages health care, a pillar of Japanese ingenuity, to resolve global health issues; and a system that builds a world that coexists in peace and prosperity through global cooperation.

#### **A health care system for the next 20 years: Vision and actions**

##### 1. Lean Health Care: Implement value-based health care

The health care system should be designed to maximize value attainable through current resources. Value-based improvements in quality and efficiency should be implemented to drive better care at lower costs. Japan's diversity demands a health care system responsive to variations in regional characteristics.

*Key suggested actions:*

By 2020

- Systematic implementation of health technology assessment
- Increase quality of health care services through professional initiatives (e.g., prevention of excessive care and medical errors)
- Develop and make general practitioners who coordinate a community-based, integrated health care system accessible throughout Japan

By 2035

- Evaluate health technology for value-based outputs, such as efficacy, and set reimbursement rates based on these values
- Benchmark performance to compare outcomes

##### 2. Life Design: Empower society and support personal choice

The health care system should empower people to make the health care choices that are best for them while supporting them to play an active role in maintaining their health. The system must also recognize that aspects of health are influenced by environmental and social factors (social determinants of health) that extend beyond individual choice.

*Key suggested actions:*

By 2020

- Realize a "Tobacco-free" Tokyo 2020 Olympics through a suite of interventions that bring Japan up to the standards of the WHO FCTC (e.g., smoking prevention for youth, tobacco tax increase, packaging and advertising regulations, smoking cessation support and treatment)
- Accelerate the use of evidence-based preventive measures with emphasis on slowing disease progression and associated health care cost reductions

- Increase quality of life and social productivity through investments in health

By 2035

- Achieve a “Tobacco-free” society by 2035
- Support the widespread use of a portable information infrastructure that includes long term care information
- Provide the public with one-stop, holistic health and lifestyle services that integrate multiple fields of care to support autonomy and agency in health
- Build communities from a social determinants of health (SDH) perspective

### 3. Global Health Leader: Lead and contribute to global health

The health care system should have the capacity to address domestic health security and provide international support for emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases that are not confined by geography. By taking an active role in the global policy making process and working to improve the health of those around the world, Japan can create a virtuous cycle in which it improves upon its own health care system while contributing to economic growth.

*Key suggested actions:*

By 2020

- Establish a health emergency management system (build a Center for Health Promotion and Protection)
- Establish a health care system capable of delivering health care to all, despite nationality or language, before the Tokyo 2020 Olympics
- Provide leadership and support to Asia and other regions as they work to develop core systems, such as universal health coverage and drug approval processes

By 2035

- Strengthen capacity to lead global infectious disease control and disaster support efforts in times of crisis
- Contribute to the strengthening of existing global health systems and the creation of a new global health governance structure

### **Governance**

The health care system will require reform that is committed to transparency and accountability and, in return, is supported by a secure financial structure that promotes these same values. The future also requires the ability to enact reform based on mid- and long-term perspectives, facilitate localized responses, encourage evidence-based policy making, and cultivate capable policy professionals.

## **Infrastructure**

### **1. Innovation**

The creation of new value and new ideas sparks societal change. Innovation cannot stop at technological development, but must extend to the systems that interact with these technologies (e.g., human resources, information, investment).

*Key suggested actions:*

By 2020

- Establish a platform for clinical trials

By 2035

- Secure research funding from a variety of sources for diseases, such as cancer and dementia
- Make Japan an epicenter of innovation, where creative people and ideas gather and grow

### **2. Information**

More efficient use of information can drastically improve health care performance, quality, value and safety. A health care database should be developed and utilized to support telemedicine applications such as remote diagnosis, remote treatment, and telesurgery.

*Key suggested actions:*

By 2020

- Build and utilize a health care network that links data using unique identifiers
- Support healthcare and disease management through analysis of check-up and treatment data

By 2035

- Utilize the data network to develop a policy evaluation process on prevention, diagnosis, treatment, disease management, care services, and long-term care

### **3. Sustainable financing**

To build a health care system for the next generation, we must develop sustainable funding sources through on-going discussion on the role and function of public health insurance, benefit and cost-sharing, and new approaches to funding.

*Key suggested actions:*

By 2020

- Allow for immediate adjustments when health care costs exceed projections (e.g., adjustments to benefits, preventive measures, resources)

By 2035

- Establish a financial support mechanism to complement public insurance
- Transfer authority to prefectures so regional disparities can be addressed

#### 4. Health professionals

Health professionals need to be mobilized, with their employment structure reviewed, and mechanisms need to be implemented that enable health professionals to focus on delivering the best possible care. People, especially those with multiple health issues, will be better supported by health professionals with knowledge of prevention, public health, communication, and management. Professionals must also be supported to function in multidisciplinary environments that integrate health care and social welfare.

*Key suggested actions:*

By 2020

- Educate capable professionals by increasing the number of graduate schools of public health

By 2035

- Develop a shared foundation for medical and social welfare qualifications (i.e., collaborative facilitation and curriculum)
- Introduce a quota in areas that continue to face physician shortages and misdistribution of specialties

#### 5. A world-class Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

We envision a transformed Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare prepared for a new era of health care and equipped with personnel committed to necessary change. Rather than vertical management and communication, the organization should enhance horizontal integration and seek opportunities to respond to and connect with what is happening in the health field and wider community. From an international perspective, the MHLW must strive to be recognized as an organization that responds with both accuracy and speed to global and domestic health crises.

*Key suggested actions:*

By 2020

- Appoint a Chief Medical Officer (CMO) to advise the Prime Minister and Health Minister on health policy and health initiatives (five-year term)
- Formulate a global health initiative that streamlines Japan's efforts in global health and international cooperation
- Establish a Bureau for Medical Innovation that drives efforts to evaluate health technologies and develop innovations in health

By 2035

- Take the lead in global discussions and policy development



<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/healthcare2035>

---