

Community Health Act

(Act No. 101 of September 5, 1947)

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Chapter I General Provisions

Article 1 The purpose of this Act is to ensure that measures under the Maternal and Child Health Act (Act No. 141 of 1965) and other laws concerning community health measures are comprehensively promoted in the community by establishing basic guidelines for promoting community health measures, the establishment of health centers, and other basic matters concerning the promotion of community health measures, thereby contributing to the maintenance and improvement of the health of local residents.

Article 2 It is a basic principle that the measures implemented by the national and local governments for the purpose of maintaining and improving the health of local residents should be promoted comprehensively, taking into consideration the characteristics of the communities, and ensuring organic coordination with related local policies, including those concerning social welfare in order to respond to the rapid aging of the population and changes in the healthcare environment in Japan and to address the diverse and increasingly sophisticated demands of local residents regarding health, sanitation, and living environments among others.

Article 3 (1) Municipalities (including special wards; the same applies hereinafter) must endeavor to develop necessary facilities, as well as secure human resources and improve their skills and qualifications to ensure that the

community health measures adopted by said municipalities can be smoothly implemented.

2 Prefectures must endeavor to develop necessary facilities, secure human resources, and improve their skills and qualifications, and conduct surveys and research, etc. to ensure that the community health measures adopted by the prefecture can be implemented smoothly. They must also endeavor to provide necessary technical assistance to municipalities in response to their requests to ensure that the responsibilities stated in the preceding paragraph can be adequately fulfilled.

3 The national government must endeavor to collect, organize, and utilize information related to community health, conduct surveys and research, cultivate human resources, and improve the skills and qualifications of human resources who are involved with community health measures. Additionally, it must also endeavor to provide municipalities and prefectures with the necessary technical and financial assistance to ensure that the responsibilities referred to in the preceding two paragraphs can be adequately fulfilled.

Chapter II Basic Guidelines for Promotion of Community Health Measures

Article 4 (1) The Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare must establish basic guidelines for the promotion of community health measures (hereinafter referred to as "basic guidelines") in order to ensure smooth implementation and comprehensive promotion of community health measures.

2 The basic guidelines are to provide for the following matters:

- (i) Basic direction of community health measure promotion;
- (ii) Basic matters concerning the development and operation of health centers and municipal health centers;
- (iii) Basic matters concerning the securement of human resources involved with community health measures and the improvement of their skills and qualifications, and the formulation of a support plan for securing human resources as stated in Article 24, paragraph (1);
- (iv) Basic matters concerning measures pertaining to surveys and research, as well as tests and examinations relating to community health;
- (v) Basic matters concerning coordination with related measures such as those regarding social welfare;
- (vi) Other important matters concerning the promotion of community health measures

3 Basic guidelines are to be established in consideration of a response to a health crisis (meaning an emergency situation in which the spread of a disease that may seriously affect the lives and health of the people or other serious public health hazards has occurred or is likely to occur; the same

applies in Article 21, paragraph (1)).

4 When the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare establishes or changes basic guidelines, the Minister must notify the public to such effect without delay.

Chapter III Health Centers

Article 5 (1) Prefectures, designated cities stated in Article 252-19, paragraph (1) of the Local Autonomy Act (Act No. 67 of 1947), core cities stated in Article 252-22, paragraph (1) of the same Act, and special wards specified by Cabinet Order will establish health centers.

2 When establishing a health center pursuant to the provisions of the preceding paragraph, a prefecture must, in order to achieve organic coordination between measures related to health care and measures related to social welfare, establish the area of jurisdiction of the health center by taking into consideration the areas prescribed in Article 30-4, paragraph (2), item (xiv) of the Medical Care Act (Act No. 205 of 1948) and the areas prescribed in Article 118, paragraph (2), item (i) of the Long-Term Care Insurance Act (Act No. 123 of 1997).

Article 6 Health centers are to plan, coordinate, and provide guidance and other necessary services for the following matters:

- (i) Matters concerning the dissemination and improvement of ideas related to community health;
- (ii) Matters concerning vital statistics and other statistics on community health;
- (iii) Matters concerning the improvement of nutrition and food sanitation;
- (iv) Matters concerning housing, water supply, sewerage, waste disposal, cleaning and other environmental sanitation;
- (v) Matters concerning medical and pharmaceutical affairs;
- (vi) Matters concerning public health nurses;
- (vii) Matters concerning the improvement and promotion of public medical services;
- (viii) Matters concerning maternal, infant, and geriatric health;
- (ix) Matters concerning dental health;
- (x) Matters concerning mental health;
- (xi) Matters concerning the health of persons in need of long-term medical treatment due to diseases for which treatment methods have not been established or other special diseases;
- (xii) Matters concerning the prevention of infectious diseases and other illnesses;
- (xiii) Matters concerning sanitary tests and examinations;

(xiv) Other matters concerning the maintenance and promotion of the health of local residents.

Article 7 In addition to what is provided for in the preceding Article, a health center may provide the following services when they are necessary in order to maintain and promote the health of local residents:

- (i) Collect, organize, and utilize information on community health pertaining to its area of jurisdiction;
- (ii) Conduct surveys and research on community health pertaining to its area of jurisdiction;
- (iii) Treat dental diseases and other diseases designated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare;
- (iv) Conduct tests and examinations, as well as allowing physicians, dentists, pharmacists, and other persons to utilize facilities related to examinations and tests.

Article 8 In addition to what is specified in the preceding two Articles, a health center established by a prefecture may conduct liaison and coordination between municipalities within their jurisdiction regarding the implementation of community health measures and may provide technical advice, training of municipal officials, and other necessary assistance upon request from the municipalities.

Article 9 The head of a local government, as prescribed in Article 5, paragraph (1) may delegate to the head of a health center affairs concerning the matters listed in the items of Article 6 that fall under the authority of the head of a local government.

Article 10 A health center is to have a director and other necessary officials pursuant to the provisions of Cabinet Order.

Article 11 A local government, as prescribed in Article 5, paragraph (1) may, pursuant to the provisions of local government ordinances, establish a management council at a health center for the purpose of deliberating matters concerning community health and the operation of a health center within the jurisdictional area of the health center.

Article 12 A local government, as prescribed in Article 5, paragraph (1) may establish a branch office to facilitate the provision of services by a health center.

Article 13 No facility, other than a health center prescribed by this Act may use words in its name that indicate it holds the status of a health center.

Article 14 No fees, charges, or treatment fees must be collected for the use of health center facilities or for the services provided at a health center, unless otherwise specified by Cabinet Order.

Article 15 The national government may, within the scope of its budget and in accordance with the provisions of Cabinet Order, subsidize all or part of the expenses required for health center facilities or equipment that are paid by a local government.

Article 16 (1) In accordance with the provisions of Cabinet Order, the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare may request the head of a local government prescribed in Article 5, paragraph (1) to make necessary reports concerning the operation of health centers.

2 The Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare may provide technical advice or recommendations to a local government, as prescribed in Article 5, paragraph (1) in relation to the establishment and operation of health centers as deemed appropriate by the Minister.

Article 17 In addition to the provisions outlined in this chapter, matters necessary for the establishment, abolition, and operation of health centers and health center branch offices are specified by Cabinet Order.

Chapter IV Municipal Health Centers

Article 18 (1) A municipal government may establish a municipal health center.

2 The municipal health center is to be a facility intended to provide the residents with health counseling, health guidance, health examinations, and other necessary services related to community health.

Article 19 Within the scope of its budget, the national government may subsidize a municipality for part of the expenses required for the establishment of a municipal health center.

Article 20 If a town or village referred to in Article 24, paragraph (1) seeks to develop a municipal health center, the national government is to give due consideration in order that the development can be carried out smoothly.

Chapter V Securing Human Resources for Community Health Measures

Article 21 (1) When the head of a local government prescribed in Article 5, paragraph (1) finds it necessary, in consideration of the status of operations pertaining to community health measures within the area over which the head of the local government has jurisdiction, when the outbreak of infectious diseases including novel influenza infections, prescribed in Article 16, paragraph (2) of the Act on the Prevention of Infectious Diseases and Medical Care for Patients with Infectious Diseases (Act No. 114 of 1998) has been publicized or when any other health crisis has occurred, the head of the local government may request that persons specified by Order of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare as having expert knowledge in community health, and who have given consent in advance to receive requests under the provisions of this paragraph, engage in operations pertaining to community health measures within the area over which the head of the local government has jurisdiction or provide advice regarding those operations.

2 A person that employs a person who has received a request under the provisions of the preceding paragraph (hereinafter referred to as "operation support personnel") must make efforts to the extent that it does not cause a significant hindrance to the performance of the business, endeavor to enable operation support personnel to perform the work or provide the advice prescribed in the preceding paragraph in response to the request.

3 Operation support personnel (excluding those who perform services or give advice prescribed in paragraph (1) as officials in the regular service prescribed in Article 3, paragraph (2) of the Local Public Service Act (Act No. 261 of 1950); hereinafter the same applies in this paragraph) must not divulge any confidential information learned in the course of giving the advice prescribed in paragraph (1) in response to the request under the provisions of the same paragraph. The same applies even after operation support personnel duties have ended.

Article 22 The national government and the local governments prescribed in Article 5, paragraph (1) are to provide the persons prescribed in paragraph (1) of the preceding Article with opportunities for training concerning the services or advice prescribed in the same paragraph and other necessary support.

Article 23 The national government is to endeavor to provide necessary advice, guidance, and other assistance to local governments as prescribed in Article 5, paragraph (1) to ensure that securing persons and their improvement of the skills and qualifications prescribed in Article 21, paragraph (1) as well as the services and advice provided by the operation support personnel are smoothly implemented.

Article 24 (1) Until otherwise provided for by law, in accordance with basic guidelines and pursuant to the provisions of Cabinet Order, a prefecture may establish a plan regarding support for securing human resources and improving the skills and qualifications of human resources in order to smoothly implement community health measures (hereinafter referred to as a "support plan for securing human resources") based on requests from towns or villages that need particular assistance in securing human resources or improving the skills and qualifications of human resources in order to implement community health measures.

2 A support plan for securing human resources is to prescribe the following matters:

- (i) The town or village to which the support plan for securing human resource pertains (hereinafter referred to as "specified town or village");
- (ii) Matters related to the content of services aimed at securing or enhancing the skills and qualifications of human resources to effectively implement community health measures in specified town or village community health measures adopted by the prefecture;

3 In addition to the matters listed in the items of the preceding paragraph, when establishing a support plan for securing human resources, efforts are to be made to establish matters concerning the basic policy for securing human resources and improving their skills and qualifications in order to smoothly implement community health measures in the specified town or village.

4 When a prefecture intends to establish or revise a support plan for securing human resources, it must hear the opinions of the specified town or village in advance.

5 When a prefecture has established or revised a support plan for securing human resources, it must notify the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare of the establishment or revision without delay.

Article 25 (1) Pursuant to the provisions of Cabinet Order and within the scope of its budget, the national government may partially subsidize prefectures for the expenses required to implement the services that are stated in paragraph (2), item (ii) of the preceding Article and provided for in a support plan for securing human resources.

2 In addition to what is prescribed in the preceding paragraph, when a prefecture that has established a support plan for securing human resources intends to implement a service specified in the plan, the national government is to endeavor to provide the necessary advice, guidance, and other assistance to ensure smooth implementation of the service.

Chapter VI Measures Concerning Surveys and Research, and Tests and Examinations Related to Community Health

Article 26 (1) The local governments prescribed in Article 5, paragraph (1) are to develop necessary systems, ensure coordination with other local governments prescribed in the same paragraph, and take other necessary measures in order to perform the surveys and research, and tests and examinations that are based on acts concerning community health measures and require expert knowledge and skills, as well as other related work specified by Order of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

2 To prevent the outbreak and spread of infectious diseases and thereby contribute to the maintenance and promotion of the health of local residents, the local government prescribed in Article 5, paragraph (1) that performs the services prescribed in the preceding paragraph (when the local government has another organization perform the services, the organization; referred to as prefectural and municipal public health institutes, etc. in the following paragraph) is to cooperate in the operations listed in Article 23, paragraph (1), items (v) and (vi) of the Act for the Institute for Health Security (provisional translation by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) (Act No. of 2023) (limited to the collection prescribed in these provisions) conducted by the Institute for Health Security (provisional translation by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) with regard to information pertaining to infectious diseases and other diseases, and pathogens and toxins obtained through the services.

3 Prefectural and municipal public health institutes, etc. are to endeavor to provide their employees with opportunities to receive training, technical assistance, and other necessary support provided by the Institute for Health Security (provisional translation by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare).

Article 27 The national government is to endeavor to provide necessary advice, guidance, and other assistance to local governments prescribed in Article 5, paragraph (1) in order to ensure smooth implementation of the measures prescribed in paragraph (1) of the preceding article, cooperation as prescribed in paragraph (2) of the article and grant of opportunity as prescribed in paragraph (3) of the article.

Chapter VII Penal Provisions

Article 28 A person who has divulged confidential information in violation of the provisions of Article 21, paragraph (3) is to be punished by imprisonment for not more than one year or a fine of not more than 500,000 yen.