

### Policy Address\*1

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The current mission of the Japan Medical Association (JMA) is to build a strong professional organization that ensures the protection of the health and well-being of the public. As president of the JMA, the largest professional organization representing physicians in Japan, I would like to briefly present the JMA’s fundamental principles and our mission statement to clarify our purposes, goals, and ideals—not only to the JMA members, but also to the people of Japan.

I wish to particularly emphasize the importance of community healthcare and its enrichment, and I would like to underscore the fact that my focus has been, and always will be, on *what should be done* to protect and enhance the community healthcare system and *how this should be done*. Each community faces various issues in their different local situations. Integrating, analyzing, and reflecting these issues in national policies is a task entrusted to the JMA, and it is the president of the JMA who must play a leading role in this mission.

For the last 30 years or so, the Japanese Government has stated the need for healthcare reform and worked toward this objective. However, the past reforms of the government have proved to deteriorate rather than improve the Japanese healthcare system. A major reason for this is that the government’s efforts have been occupied mostly by balancing and maintaining the national finances and did not fully take account of the different local healthcare environments.

It should be possible for the JMA to gather real opinions from the local medical associations, analyze what needs to be enriched or improved based on this information, and urge the government to realize reform plans in accor-



dance with this analysis. We also need to ask the government to secure necessary and sufficient funding to achieve these reform plans. All this must be done in a speedy fashion, and I am constantly ready to take the lead in such efforts. This may be something that the JMA was previously lacking.

The word “medicine” in a Japanese dictionary is defined as “providing treatment for illness.” But does this mean that palliative care or terminal care is not medicine?—I think not. The reality of medicine is surpassing the dictionary definition. Healthcare continues to change as time passes, and healthcare among communities also varies. National policies try to put them all together, but evidently they do not lead to building a healthcare system that has the interest of the public at heart. We have to promptly formulate health policies that meet community needs, and there is no time to waste.

I will also continue to strengthen the JMA support for the disaster areas in their reconstruction and restoration activities following the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011 that are still in progress. I shall devote all my energy to creating an environment in which all Japanese citizens, including the disaster victims, can receive optimal health care.

When I became licensed decades ago, real time display of the cross-sectional images of a body was only a dream. Diagnostic technology, endoscopic examination and surgery, organ

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transplants, cell culture, etc.—all aspects of medicine are making rapid progress, and becoming widely available for physicians and patients. Developing new technology and making it widely available is the fruit of work mainly by all relevant specialty societies. The Japanese Association of Medical Sciences (JAMS), an internal organization of the JMA supervises about 100 specialty societies, and many member physicians of the JMA belong to these societies relevant to their areas of practice. In order for the medical

progress to enhance the achievements of their clinical practice and contribute to the people's health in Japan, both the JMA and JAMS must work closely together to protect the well-being of the people.

The JMA is firmly determined to make the utmost effort to further improve healthcare in Japan and contribute to international activities through the WMA and CMAAO for the betterment of public health throughout the world.