

Anti-smoking and Anti-diabetes Initiatives —Recent activities of the Tokushima Medical Association—

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The Tokushima Medical Association (TMA), which renewed its board in 2007, has been engaged in a wide range of new activities. This paper discusses several of these.

The first of these activities is the anti-smoking initiative headed by Dr. Kawashima, the President of the TMA. The Japan Medical Association (JMA) adopted the JMA Declaration on Anti-Smoking Initiatives in 2003. The JMA board passed a resolution on the promotion of comprehensive tobacco regulation measures in which the JMA Anti-smoking Initiatives Committee plays a central role, including a ban on smoking in public areas, the raising of the price of cigarettes, and the removal of vending machines to prevent smoking by minors.

The TMA board unanimously resolved in 2007 to submit to the Governor of Tokushima Prefecture and Chairman of the Tokushima Prefectural Assembly a petition requesting the institution of non-smoking regulations banning smoking in public facilities, including medical institutions, in Tokushima Prefecture and also adopted a proposal to report this move to the JMA.

The petition listed the following three important points.

(1) In many cases of fire in not only medical institutions but also care facilities, the primary cause is cigarette smoking. This sometimes exposes other patients and residents to life-threatening situations; (2) in Tokushima, which has the country's highest diabetes death rate, an anti-smoking initiative would effectively serve to reduce the death rate; and (3) prefectural offices, which are



currently divided into smoking and non-smoking areas, should be made non-smoking throughout their premises.

This petition was submitted by President Kawashima to the Deputy Governor of Tokushima at the prefectural government office on May 30, the day before World No Tobacco Day. A report and photograph of the event appeared in local newspapers on World No Tobacco Day. This was an effective public related activity. Several difficulties must be overcome to institute non-smoking regulations that are not legally based. We believe that this petition by the TMA to the governor and assembly was of great significance in tackling this problem.

Tokushima Prefecture has the shameful distinction of having the highest diabetes death rate in Japan. To overcome this situation, TMA has been engaged in a wide range of activities since 2004. The “One Thousand More Steps” campaign which is an exercise program for the residents of Tokushima is currently being planned as part of this initiative.

Residents of Tokushima Prefecture spend less time walking and take approximately 1,000 steps

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fewer than residents of other prefectures. To encourage them to exercise more in their daily activities, a promotion group is to be set up with its secretariat located in the TMA office. In addition to the medical association, this group will include members from the prefectural walking association, sports centers throughout the region, and the prefectural branch of the Japan Association of Fitness Instructors. Its objective is to encourage residents to adopt the daily habit

of taking one thousand more steps.

Specific issues that may need to be addressed include the method of recording exercise, conversion of other types of exercise into walking steps, distribution of pedometers, and assistance programs for those who cannot exercise by themselves. It is our sincere hope that the establishment of this group will help to lower the diabetes death rate in Tokushima Prefecture in the future.