

The Wide Scope of Activities of the Nagasaki Prefectural Medical Association

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TV Program “Weekly Health Magazine”

To better inform citizens of the prefecture in regard to the delivery of medical services, welfare, and health care, all of which have become increasingly complex, the prefectural government and our Nagasaki Prefectural Medical Association (NpMA) began in 2004 to provide a 2.5-minute TV broadcast entitled “Weekly Health Magazine” (broadcast by KTN TV-Nagasaki at 10:54 pm every Friday). The two parties take partial responsibility for the program contents. The program has a high audience rating of 9% on average.

Posters with the program’s broadcast schedule are distributed to members through municipal medical associations every month. The program broadcast reached its 200th airing in March 2008. Program contents have been recorded on videotape and utilized as informational sources. The production cost of the program is 11 million yen (US\$ 112,245)*² annually, with 5.5 million yen (US\$ 56,122) provided by the prefectural government.

“Health” Column in the Newspaper *Nagasaki Shimbun*

Through the good offices of the *Nagasaki Shimbun*, the column “Health Care System: Q & A,” in which the NpMA replies to questions from residents of the prefecture that concern the health care system, has appeared in the newspaper since 2002.



Physical Fitness Counseling Project for Prefectural Residents

When the Nagasaki Prefectural General Gymnastic Hall opened in 1994, a physical fitness counseling project aimed at promoting the maintenance and enhancement of the health of residents was initiated as a program of the Gymnastic Hall, based on a proposal from the NpMA. Free counseling is offered to 5 individuals at most on each occasion on the first and third Saturdays of each month. This project with its history of 14 years is now well known to the residents of the prefecture.

The NpMA’s Support for Fitness and Sporting Activities

Sports and fitness training are extremely useful for maintaining and enhancing health and physical fitness. In particular, from the viewpoint that sound fostering of health, physical strength, mental health, and moral culture among the young people responsible for the next generation are

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*2 Yen/dollar exchange rate: 1 US dollar=98 yen.

important, the NpMA gives a sports award to organizations that promote fitness and sports activities for young people. This awarding ceremony is held annually, and a commendation certificate and a supplementary prize are given to commendation winners at the regular general assembly of the NpMA.

Formulation of the Nagasaki Investigational Healthcare Network

In recent years, there have been major changes in the healthcare environment, including increases in healthcare costs associated with a rapidly aging population and progress in medical technology as well as IT. On the other hand, the need of patients for healthcare and medicines has become increasingly diversified.

Patients with diseases for which no effective drug is available face a compelling need for new drugs and medical devices. It is necessary to quickly provide patients with more safe and effective state-of-the-art drugs. The Japanese government formulated the “Three-year National Clinical Trial Activation Plan” in April 2003 to ensure a standardized system for the implementation of clinical trials. In addition, formulation of the ensuing clinical trial activation plan was begun in June 2008, aiming at further improvement of the environment for clinical trials.

In Nagasaki Prefecture, as in other parts of Japan, clinical trials have been carried out in a limited number of medical facilities. To improve the environment to facilitate the participation of more medical facilities in clinical trials and to allow patients to receive the most advanced medical therapies from facilities in the vicinity of their residence, a committee for formulating an investigational healthcare network, i.e., the Nagasaki Investigational Healthcare Network, was set up in 2006. This network consists of 22 medical facilities including four core medical facilities located in four different areas of the prefecture (as of July 2007). Further improvement of the system is underway to enhance coordination with clinics and other organizations that wish to participate in clinical trials.

Broad-based Provision of Vaccinations

As the method of routine preventive vaccination was changed from mass vaccination to individual

vaccination, and as physicians' obligation to perform preliminary examination prior to vaccination was stipulated, extension of vaccination services between municipalities has been promoted nationwide for the convenience of individuals who have a family doctor whose office is outside their district of residence.

The House of Delegates of the NpMA suggested in its meeting in March 2004 that the fulfillment of this activity should be promoted with the NpMA playing the leading role. To respond to this, a task force was set up in cooperation with those in charge of relevant services in local governments to discuss specific issues. As a result, contracts were made among local governments, the Nagasaki National Health Insurance Organization, and the NpMA, and the project “Broad-based Provision of Routine Preventive Vaccinations in Nagasaki Prefecture” was started on October 1, 2006, and was executed in fiscal 2007.

Continuing Medical Education (CME) and Training Programs for Industrial Health Physicians

Nagasaki Prefecture has the largest number of islands of any prefecture in Japan. It is very difficult for members living on these islands to come to the prefectural capital, Nagasaki City, to join the CME or training programs for industrial health physicians.

Therefore, the NpMA sends instructors to each city on 3 major islands once every 3 years to provide two-day (Saturday and Sunday) CME programs and industrial health physician training to its members on isolated islands.

Kidney Screening at School

With the attempt to promote the system of providing kidney screenings of a uniform level in the prefecture, the board members in charge of the school doctor program and other members have carried out a survey of the activities of school kidney screenings every year since 1989, with collaboration from municipal medical associations, laboratories, etc. It should be also mentioned that opinions about the method of school urinalysis screening and other issues are exchanged to improve the health management of schoolchildren through this screening system.

Nagasaki ACLS Course

The NpMA started an advanced cardiac life-support (ACLS) training course in 2001. This training course, the Nagasaki ACLS course, obtained the official approval of the American Heart Association (AHA) and was offered as the 1st AHA-ACLS course (the 6th Nagasaki ACLS course) in 2004.

ACLS course sponsored by the NpMA

The ACLS training course sponsored by the NpMA was the first attempt in Japan, and it has received national recognition as a high-level training course. About 130 doctors (mostly doctors in this prefecture) have completed this training course to date, and have received a certificate signed by the president of the NpMA.

Agreement between the AHA and the Japan Resuscitation Council (JRC)

In association with the agreement made between the AHA and the JRC to authorize the JRC as an International Training Organization (ITO) in February 2003, the JRC came to entrust the Japan ACLS Association with operational tasks of basic life support (BLS) and ACLS training.

In April 2004, the Nagasaki ACLS course was approved as a training site by the AHA Japan ITO to allow trainees who complete this course to receive an AHA certificate and to be registered as an AHA ACLS provider.

Although it is preferable for all doctors to complete training up to the ACLS course, not all doctors can undertake a two-day training program, and it is currently not technically possible to provide training programs at present. A half-day Heartsaver AED course is now made available for doctors as part of standard risk management to cope with sudden changes in a patient's condition.