

Policy Address^{*1}

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On behalf of the elected officials, I thank you for your votes. It is a great honor and I keenly feel the grave responsibility ahead of us.

The policy of containing healthcare expenditure that went too far under Koizumi Administration’s market fundamentalism resulted in physicians’ pride being trampled and deterioration of the quality of community healthcare. With political power having shifted recently, now is the chance for us to rebuild the healthcare system in Japan. I want to remodel Japan Medical Association (JMA) so that members will be able to unite against any obstacles to appropriate and necessary healthcare activities. It was with that desire that I ran for presidency of the JMA, and my success in this election on April 1 has only strengthened that resolve.^{*3}

For the JMA to fight to build a healthcare system truly for the nation, it must reform itself to be an association that is trusted by the general public.

To Promote United Action of the Physicians

In Japan, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare have traditionally divided physicians into two groups; hospital-employed and self-employed physicians. Whilst we work to revitalize healthcare activities, however, the energy of physicians should not be dispersed. Firstly, we will aim to make an association that values the voices of every member so that physicians can take united action. We will create a system for our members to directly send me their opinions and requests via JMA’s website.



We are also considering the establishment of “a liaison council for clinics” and “a liaison council for hospitals” to enable the JMA to consult with members and other related organizations for coordinated action.

To Protect the Safety and Security of the People with Improvement of Healthcare

Until the change in political administration, the first priority had been given to the economy and the discussion of healthcare was left behind. This must be corrected. A nation without a good healthcare system is in an unhappy situation. It is only when truly good and sufficient healthcare is provided to patients that we can promise citizens a lifetime of safety and security. Moreover, it is our most basic mission to protect the lives and health of the people. In addition, we will change the Association’s committees, which have thus far been mainly for discussion, to be capable of cooperating with local governments and communities for a wide variety of perspectives. We will create a system that allows a swift response to

^{*1} This is a revised English version of the policy address delivered in Japanese by Dr. Katsuyuki Haranaka at a regular press conference on April 14, 2010.

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^{*3} The elections of the Japan Medical Association Board of Trustees were held at the 122 Regular General Assembly of the JMA House of Delegates in Tokyo, April 1, 2010.

requests from the people and the government to cope with emergency situations such as the outbreak of a new influenza.

To Propose What Ideal Healthcare Should Be

The new government has accepted the need to increase healthcare expenditure. This offers hope of revitalization of healthcare, but they need to change the traditional way of thinking from focusing on how to contain medical costs, to thinking what kind of healthcare to provide. Thirdly, we will strengthen the activities of the Japan Medical Association Research Institute (JMARI) to increase its abilities for scientific analysis and information collection. I myself will oversee JMARI, which will depart from the position of raising objections to policies already decided by the government and will instead establish theories and evidence so that the JMA can propose structured health policies to the government.

Toward a Stronger Japan Medical Association

Without self-reform, the JMA will not be able to fight. We will establish an advisory committee specifically to reform the JMA itself. Together with these efforts, we will increase the transparency of the association's activities and accounting and will disclose information as a general rule. We will also establish an independent committee

to discuss the merits and demerits of directly electing JMA president, who is currently elected by delegates.

We will deal with each political issue fairly and candidly. It would help to have ties with the ruling party, but it is also important to keep an appropriate distance. Stringent budgetary measures will continue in Japan for the time being, and the Ministry of Finance is maintaining its stance of fiscal neutrality. In order to secure sufficient funds for healthcare and revitalize healthcare under these circumstances, we should, on behalf of JMA members and the general public, speak out to the government about what is correct or incorrect.

I will sincerely devote myself to the JMA. I will also reconsider the real mission of the JMA and what we should do to accomplish this mission. Thus far, JMA has been recognized as an academic organization by its members. Physicians are practicing medicine with a high degree of professionalism. They should naturally continue learning throughout their life. We must more closely coordinate academic activities with the practical activities of JMA. To that end we must ask ourselves what kind of association JMA should be. I believe that once we have answered this basic question we will be able to revitalize the JMA itself.

In this rapidly changing era, I will endeavor to recover physicians' pride and the people's trust in medicine. I ask for your strong support in this endeavor.