

Congratulatory Message

Yoshitake YOKOKURA
President, Japan Medical Association



On behalf of the Japan Medical Association (JMA), I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Takemi Program in International Health at the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH), which we are celebrating this year.

As you know, this program is a course bearing the name of Dr. Taro Takemi, a past-president of the JMA. Recognizing the importance above all else of nurturing capable leaders with broad global knowledge and experience in order to improve healthcare in Japan, Dr. Takemi established this program at Harvard University.

At that time, Dr. Takemi asserted based on the theme “Development and Allocation of Medical Care Resources” that it was important to resolve various domestic and international problems from the standpoint of what is now referred to as “global health.” Subsequently, the theme “Development and Allocation of Medical Care Resources” also became an eternal issue for the World Medical Association and is a broad-ranging fundamental issue that medical associations around the world continue to tackle today—one whose importance we medical professions must re-acknowledge.

I would like to offer my sincere respect and warmest congratulations to all the HSPH faculty who have Dr. Takemi’s wisdom and sustained the Takemi Program, particularly Professor Michael R. Reich, who has played a central role in the program over decades. I would also like to express my heartiest thanks to the Japan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, which has supported the Takemi Program over 20 years through the provision of operating funds.

Japan is currently facing the arrival of the super-aging society and of the reality of the declining birthrate. Under these circumstances, how to best protect the health of the general public while firmly maintaining the universal health insurance system is becoming an extremely large and pressing issue. Such problems cannot be resolved from only a domestic perspective; they are problems that need to be tackled from a dynamic and international perspective.

It is also imperative that the world also seek solutions to health issues—such as transnational systems of cooperation amongst medical professions for addressing infectious diseases spreading internationally and natural disasters, etc.—from an international perspective through the true cooperation of all countries.

The JMA holds high expectations for the Takemi Program, which has the excellent performance record of producing a large number of Takemi Fellows from around the world—242 fellows from 51 countries thus far—and has over many years endeavored to enhance and expand the program content.

It is my hope that Takemi Fellows will take advantage of their experience studying under the Takemi Program—a course with a high degree of international contribution—and continue to make great leaps forward in the future. The JMA also intends to proactively provide support for activities aimed at these objectives.

With this 30th Anniversary Commemorative Symposium marking the close of one chapter and the beginning of another, I would like to conclude my congratulatory remarks by having a strong hope that the Takemi Program will continue to contribute even further to the enhancement of global health in the future.