

## With Regard to Reaching Broad Agreement on the TPP Agreement Negotiations\*<sup>1</sup>

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Japan Medical Association

On October 5, 2015, the ministerial meeting for Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations, which had been in session in Atlanta, USA, reached a broad agreement. Consequently, the TPP Headquarters at Japan's Cabinet Secretariat released the Overview of the TPP Agreement.

For years, the Japan Medical Association (JMA) has strongly urged the government and the ruling party to firmly secure the future of the universal health insurance system of Japan. On February 20, 2013, immediately before Prime Minister Shinzo Abe left the country to attend the Japan-US summit meeting, the JMA made a proposal to government officials including Prime Minister Abe titled, "To Protect the People of Japan from TPP."<sup>1</sup> On February 27, after the summit meeting, the JMA released "Our Opinions on the Government's Determination to Join the TPP Negotiations"<sup>2</sup> and held a regular press conference to urge the government to prevent the TPP negotiations from influencing the universal health insurance system.

In response, Prime Minister Abe stated in the Diet that the public healthcare system was not subject to the TPP negotiations, and that the negotiations would never affect the universal health insurance system of Japan. Additionally, the Liberal Democratic Party's Resolution on Participating in the TPP Negotiations by the Diplomatic and Economic Partnership Council stipulates that the universal health insurance system and public pricing system for prescription drugs are "national interests that must be protected."

Along with these firm efforts by the JMA, statements that ensure the protection of the Japanese universal health insurance system were



Dr. Yokokura making a statement at the World Medical Association General Assembly

included in the Overview of the TPP Agreement. In Chapter 10 Cross-Border Trade in Services, the Overview specifically states that Japan has secured comprehensive reservations on social services such as healthcare, social security, and public insurance programs, and that social security will be exempt from the ratchet clause. In addition, in Chapter 11 Financial Services, it states that the TPP will not apply to activities and services that are part of legal systems relating to public pension plans or social security (including public healthcare programs) or that are carried out by the signatory nation's own budgets, guarantees, or financial resources. Through tenacious efforts of the TPP negotiating team, the JMA's demand to protect the universal health insurance system of Japan was incorporated in these 2 points.

However, the potential effects of some factors on the Japanese healthcare system remains unclear, such as the introduction of strong enforcement systems for the protection of the intellectual property of medicines mentioned in Chapter 18 Intellectual Property.

The following 3 points must be fulfilled in

\*<sup>1</sup> This article is based on the statement made by Dr. Yoshitake Yokokura, President of the Japan Medical Association at the General Assembly of the World Medical Association in Moscow, Russia on October 17, 2015.

order to protect the world-renowned universal health insurance system of Japan: (1) the range of public healthcare benefits must be maintained, (2) combining covered and uncovered insurance care must never be allowed, and (3) commercial entities (i.e., corporations) must never be allowed to take part in the management of health-care institutions.

The details will be negotiated henceforth, and then each nation is expected to start the ratification procedures domestically. As the members of the Diet debate the issue, the JMA strongly urges the ruling party and the government to preserve our world-renowned universal

health insurance system. Social security and the economy interact with each other. The JMA shall continue the close and strict observation of the developments under the TPP.

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#### References

1. Japan Medical Association. A Proposal to Protect the People of Japan from TPP. 2013. [http://dl.med.or.jp/dl-med/teireikaiken/20130227\\_14.pdf](http://dl.med.or.jp/dl-med/teireikaiken/20130227_14.pdf). (in Japanese)
2. Japan Medical Association. Our Opinions on the Government's Determination to Join the TPP Negotiations. 2013. [http://dl.med.or.jp/dl-med/teireikaiken/20130227\\_11.pdf](http://dl.med.or.jp/dl-med/teireikaiken/20130227_11.pdf). (in Japanese)