



## News from the International HPH Network

# Establishment of Japan HPH Network – “Sailing” with 36 members onboard

The Japan HPH Network was established on October 17, 2015, by representatives of 36 HPH member organizations in Japan. A celebration took place after the inauguration ceremony, and was attended by 120 researchers and representatives of medical organizations, all enjoying the exchange of ideas and hopes for the future HPH Secretariat.

Mitsuhiko Funakoshi<sup>1</sup>

### About the National HPH Network of Japan

The Japanese Network consists of 36 HPH member Hospitals and Health Services in Japan.

The Network was established on October 17, 2015.

<sup>1</sup>Mitsuhiko Funakoshi is the National Coordinator of the Japanese HPH Network. He is also the assistant director at Chidoribashi General Hospital, the first HPH member in Japan.

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### A strong group of collaborators ensured the HPH establishment

Upon the establishment of the Japanese HPH Network, the representatives of national medical federations, presidents of medical societies, and renowned professors within the field joined as the network founders. I would like to thank the eight founding doctors and all the representatives from various medical organizations for their attendance and their growing interest in the newly founded HPH network in Japan.

The eight founders are:

- Dr. Tsuneo Sakai, president of the Japan Hospital Association
- Dr. Kimio Henmi, chairperson of the Japan Municipal Hospital Association
- Dr. Izumi Maruyama, president of the Japan Primary Care Association
- Dr. Norio Shimauchi, president of the Japanese Society of Health Promotion
- Dr. Satoshi Izawa, director-superintendent of the Saku Central Hospital - Nagano Prefectural Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives for Health and Welfare
- Dr. Katsunori Kondo, professor of the Center for Preventive Medical Science - Chiba University
- Dr. Takaaki Fujiwara, chairman of the Japanese Health and Welfare Cooperative Federation
- Dr. Mamoru Fujisue, president of the Japan Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions.

Moreover, a greeting was delivered to the forum by Dr. Alex Ross, director of WHO Kobe Centre, on behalf of the World Health Organization. From the International HPH Network, a video message arrived from CEO Prof. Hanne Tonnesen. In addition, we received a video message from Dr. Dong-won Lee, coordinator of the Korean HPH Network, and a heartwarming message from Dr. Shu-Ti Chiou, CEO of Taiwan HPH Network.



Mitsuhiko Funakoshi, HPH Coordinator of Japan

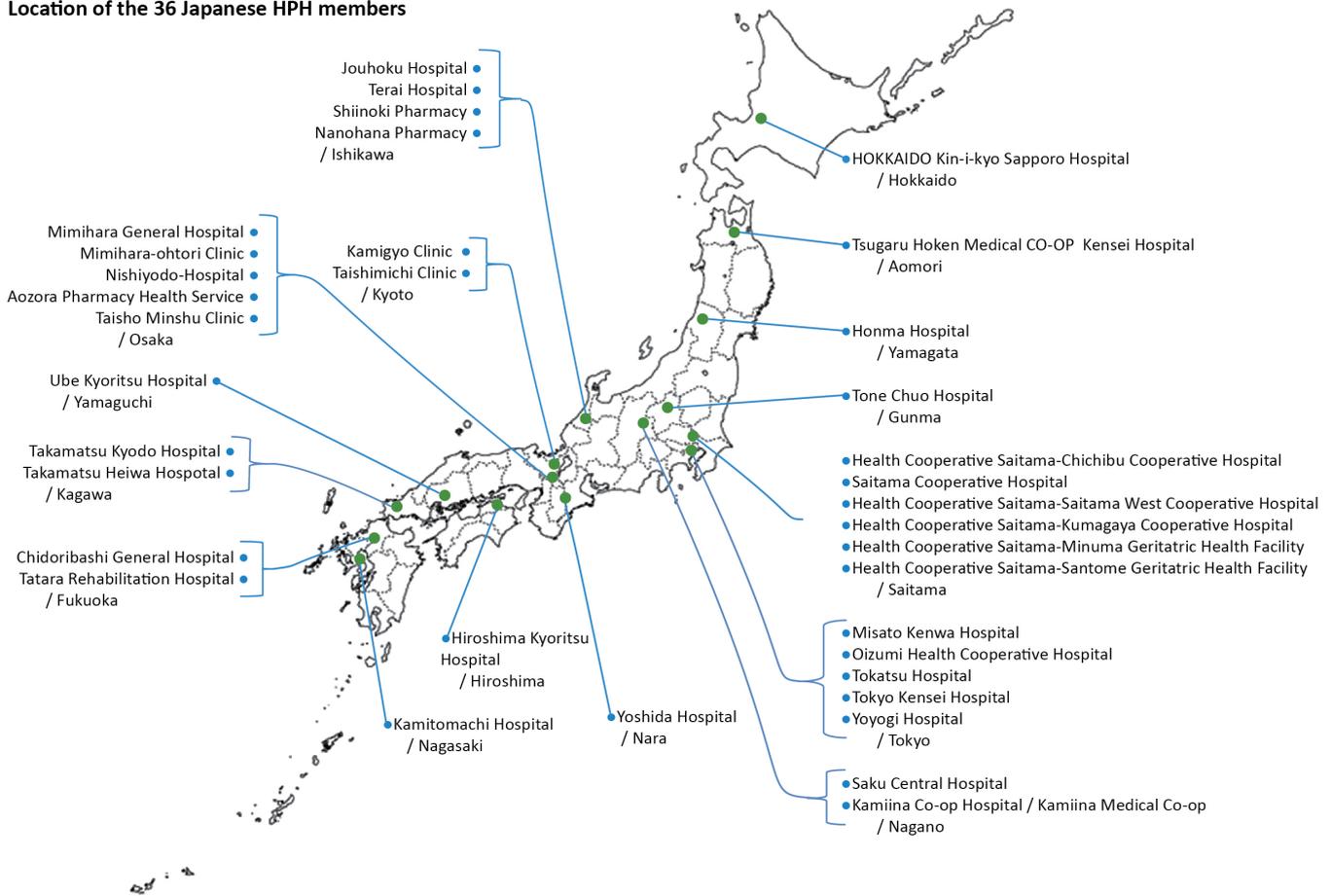
### The history of HPH in Japan

Chidoribashi Hospital was the first Japanese hospital to join the International HPH Network and became a member in 2008. The initial encounter with the HPH network and Chidoribashi Hospital happened by a coincidence, when I was searching for “Healthy City” on the



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### Location of the 36 Japanese HPH members



The 36 members are spread out in most regions of Japan and cover a strong group of hospitals and health facilities

internet. Reading the website of HPH, I felt growing agreement with the activities of HPH network, because it matched the principles of Chidoribashi Hospital and our practice of health promotion activities. So I decided to join the International HPH Network. It was in 2010, I first attended the International Conference in Manchester. The theme of that conference was “Tackling Causes and Consequences of Inequalities in Health: Contributions of Health Services and the HPH Network.” I was deeply impressed by the principle, and the actual lectures were so outstanding that I wanted to promote HPH in Japan.

### Health Promotion in Japan

Thinking that HPH is a materialization of redirecting the roles of health services, an idea proposed by Ottawa Charter, the kinds of activities suggested by HPH have been in practice at some Japanese hospitals already. So, the idea itself is not completely new.

Therefore, I would like to introduce the readers to some of the health promotion activities in practice at Japanese Hospitals. A renowned example in this field is Saku Central Hospital, which is also a member of the Japanese HPH Network. Founded in 1944 by a cooperation of farmers, Saku Central Hospital has operated a health activity to protect the lives and environment of community people, based on the spirit of “together with the farmers.” In many ways, the Saku Central Hospital has been a first mover on matters that we consider to be common practice today. It has a history of sending doctors to the community (since 1945), even before the introduction of universal health insurance coverage system, finding causes of diseases “in farmers’ everyday life” (now referred as Social Determinants of Health), and working on improvement of those in collaboration with community people and local government. It also initiated a public health control system for all residents of a poor village called Yachiho Village in collaboration with local government. In this effort,



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At the inauguration ceremony, all founders, invited speakers and selected participants were photographed.

Instructors of Health were appointed among the villagers and fostered as leaders of health promotion. This achieved a leading example to include community people into a voluntary health promotion activity, and this experience of public health control was later adopted as a national model for public health checkup system in Japan.

Min-Iren (The Japanese Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions), which many members of the Japanese HPH network belong to, has a strong tradition of community-based health promotion activities. The feature lies in the Min-Iren's activity style, in which Min-Iren hospitals work with members of Friend's Association or medical cooperative who are also community residents. An example on this is the Health Co-operative SAITAMA, which the Saitama Kyodo Hospital belongs to. The Saitama Co-operative has 240,000 members and facilitates a variety of health promotion activities in local communities. The activities include community-based classes on health and childcare, as well as visits by hospital staffs at schools giving education on sex and protection. Health Co-operative SAITAMA also works with labor unions to provide a free consultation for the people in need on health and labor related problems.

### Future challenges for health promotion in Japan

The average life expectancy of the Japanese population is one of the highest in the world. However, the high life expectancy creates specific challenges for Japan such as a super-aging society and enlarging economic disparity. The community is faced with an increased need for support of the increasing number of aged people and especially those living alone. This socially fragile settings and the need of support of those people living alone are becoming a serious challenge for the health services. The national health insurance system, which once was world famous, is also starting to show deterioration. What we see is that quite a number of people detain from going to the hospital regardless of serious health problems due to economic difficulties. The need for offering health promotion activities is obvious for the elderly population, and the support and focus on health promotion by the hospitals and health services will contribute to the health and well-being of the community. Taking advantage of the experiences of health promotion activity acquired by member hospitals, the Japanese HPH Network will enhance the exchanges of information among national members, the international network and the local communities, and by doing this contribute in finding solutions for the Japanese population.