

# The **JIHS** Quarterly

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**A Quarterly Newsletter Covering Activities from March to May, 2025**

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# Message from the President of JIHS –

## Norihiro Kokudo

On April 1, 2025, the **Japan Institute for Health Security (JIHS)** was established through the integration of the **National Institute of Infectious Diseases (NIID)** and the **National Center for Global Health and Medicine (NCGM)**.



This integration marks a new chapter in Japan's public health history, tracing back to the encounter of two renowned medical scholars—**Shibasaburo Kitasato** and **Mori Ōgai**—in Berlin 137 years ago. Kitasato, a globally recognized microbiologist, studied under Robert Koch and succeeded in cultivating the tetanus bacillus and developing serum therapy. Mori Ōgai, a literary figure and public health contributor, also studied under Koch and conducted research on pathogens in Berlin's sewage—work that connects to today's wastewater surveillance.

The NIID originated from the Institute for Infectious Diseases founded by Kitasato in 1892, evolving through various forms to become the NIID in 1997. It has consistently played a central role in infectious disease research in Japan.

The NCGM traces its roots to a temporary military hospital established in 1868. It later became the Tokyo First National Hospital and eventually the NCGM in 1993. The affiliated National College of Nursing was founded in 2001, with about 90% of its graduates joining one of six national centers.

The newly formed JIHS comprises of two research institutes (NIID and NIGM), two general hospitals (NCGM and Kohnodai Medical Center), National College of Nursing, Center for Clinical Sciences, Bureau of Global Health Cooperation. The Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) office has also been relocated to JIHS. Experts from diverse backgrounds contribute to research, healthcare workforce development, international cooperation, and public health initiatives.

JIHS is positioned as a comprehensive medical research institution capable of protecting the public from various health crises. With respect for the legacy and

culture of the integrated organizations, JIHS aims to fulfill its mission: *“To contribute to a safe society through research and medical services related to infectious diseases and other health issues.”*

Our vision is to become a world-leading infectious disease science center, integrating research across basic science, clinical medicine, epidemiology, public health, and social sciences, and delivering cutting-edge healthcare and public health strategies.

## Message from the Vice President of JIHS –

### Takaji Wakita

As Vice President, I am committed to fulfilling JIHS’s mission: *“To contribute to a secure society through research and medical services related to infectious diseases and other health issues.”* Under the vision of becoming a world-leading infectious disease science center, we aim to integrate research across basic science, clinical medicine, epidemiology, public health, and social sciences, and deliver cutting-edge healthcare and public health strategies.



The integration of NIID and NCGM on April 1, 2025, marks a new beginning for JIHS. Reflecting on the founding of the National Institute of Preventive Health (Yoken) in 1947, which was the predecessor of NIID, we aim to evolve into a comprehensive medical research institute.

During the post-war period, Japan faced widespread infectious diseases, poor medical conditions, and a shortage of quality pharmaceuticals. GHQ initiated the establishment of a national research institute under the Ministry of Health to address these issues. Half of the staff from the University of Tokyo’s Institute of Infectious Diseases transferred to Yoken.

Yoken’s initial functions included setting standards for vaccines and sera, planning comprehensive infectious disease research and sharing international research findings with Japan and vice versa.

Originally envisioned as a National Institute of Health, it was to include cancer, tuberculosis, and cardiovascular research centers. Over time, it evolved to meet changing needs, maintaining core functions in infectious disease research, epidemiology, public health, and vaccine quality control.

In 1992, the institute moved to Toyama district of Shinjuku, and in 1997, it was renamed NIID. The move included collaboration with other national institutes, forming a Comprehensive Medical Research Center, which aligns with JIHS's current vision.

NIID has built strong partnerships with domestic and international health organizations, including WHO and local health institutes. These relationships form the foundation of JIHS's activities.

With the integration of NIID and NCGM, JIHS is now equipped to respond to all health crises, not just infectious diseases. NCGM's broad clinical and research capabilities, along with its international cooperation and nursing education programs, bring diverse expertise to the organization.

We aim to realize the dream of evolving into a comprehensive medical research institute and strengthen Japan's resilience in health crisis response.

## **JIHS Inauguration Ceremony Held on April 4**

To commemorate this milestone, a founding ceremony of JIHS was held on Friday, April 4.

The event began with opening remarks by Director Sadaji Takei of JIHS. Following this, President Norihiro Kokudo addressed the audience, emphasizing that the mission of JIHS is to contribute to a society where people can live with peace of mind, especially in times of infectious disease emergencies.

Minister Akazawa expressed strong support for the establishment of JIHS, stating that the government will work closely with the leadership team, including President Kokudo and Vice President Wakita, to ensure JIHS fulfills its expected role. Dr. Yoshirō Matsumoto, President of the Japan Medical Association, stressed the importance of establishing a robust organizational structure and workforce capable of responding effectively in emergencies. He also expressed a desire for close collaboration with JIHS. Minister

Fukuoka (represented by a proxy) highlighted JIHS's role as a new expert body that will provide scientific insights to the government. He emphasized expectations for JIHS to strengthen initial response capabilities, enhance research and development, improve clinical functions during health crises, and promote human resource development and international cooperation.



## Graduation and Completion Ceremony Held at the National College of Nursing

**March 21, 2025** – On a spring day with hints of warmth in the air, the Graduation and Completion Ceremony was held at the National College of Nursing in Kiyose. Distinguished guests included Sasaki, Chief Medical and Crisis Management Officer of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare; President Kokudo of JIHS; Mayor Shibuya of Kiyose City; and representatives from NCGM and other National Centers.

Each graduate received their diploma, certificate of completion, and degree certificate personally from President Kayama of the college.

In her speech, President Kayama expressed confidence in the high caliber of the graduates, stating:

“Care provided by nursing professionals is only complete when it brings true peace of mind to the recipient. In our aging



society with declining birthrates, it is essential to review and streamline existing procedures to ensure sustainable healthcare. I hope you will respect your predecessors while discerning what must change and what must remain, and continue to innovate.”

President Kokudo of JIHS welcomed the graduates warmly, saying:

“With the integration of NCGM and NIID, JIHS has now begun a new chapter. Those of you joining JIHS are the first to be welcomed into this new organization. As the inaugural president, I am truly delighted to work with you.”



A representative of the graduates reflected on their journey:

“We began with online classes, then transitioned to in-person learning and clinical training, growing together as future nurses. Our experiences with patients shaped our nursing philosophy and gave us confidence. We are deeply grateful to the faculty, hospital staff, community members, and especially the patients and families who accepted us during the pandemic despite the risks.”

Many graduates will begin their careers as healthcare professionals at JIHS and other National Centers. The message to those in the field was a request for firm yet compassionate guidance to support the growth of these new nurses and midwives.

## Entrance Ceremony for the 2025 Academic Year Held in April

**April 9, 2025** – The first entrance ceremony since the transition to JIHS was held at the National College of Nursing in Kiyose. Distinguished guests included President Kokudo, representatives from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, JIHS, and various National Centers. This year, a total of 124 students began their studies at the college:





# Participating in Earthquake Relief in Central Myanmar



## — Report from the International Emergency Medical Team (JDR)

In April 2025, four members of JIHS joined the JICA International Emergency Assistance Team (JDR) as part of the medical team responding to the earthquake in Mandalay, Myanmar.

Under scorching temperatures exceeding 40°C daily, the team provided medical care to over 2,100 individuals during their 20-day mission. Their support extended beyond trauma care to include the management of chronic conditions, Prenatal consultations and pediatric health guidance.



The team consisted of doctors, nurses, radiology technicians, and interpreters, working together to deliver compassionate and thorough care despite limited time and resources.

Team members embraced local customs, wearing traditional attire and Thanaka, a traditional facial paste. These gestures helped build trust and fostered a sense of connection with the local community. Many residents felt reassured and welcomed the team warmly.

The team members shared that their previous DMAT disaster response experience was invaluable. Working side-by-side with colleagues and seeing patients' smiles reminded them of the core values of being healthcare professionals.

"Delivering heartfelt care, even in a foreign land, reaffirmed our commitment to medicine and humanity."

- Dr. Jiro Oba – Medical doctor, Department of International Operations
- Kayako Chishima – Nurse, Disaster Crisis Control Measures Section
- Yoshiaki Toyokuni – Logistics Coordinator, Disaster Crisis Control Measures Section

- Toru Takeda – Nurse, Block Measures Section

Their collaborative efforts with local doctors and interpreters extended beyond medical treatment—it helped expand circles of trust and hope in a time of crisis.



## Infectious Disease Crisis Management Leadership Training Program (Long-Term)

### Opening Ceremony Held on April 17, 2025

On Thursday, April 17, 2025, the Japan Institute for Health Security (JIHS) hosted the opening ceremony for its long-term Infectious Disease Crisis Management





Leadership Training Program. This year, two trainees were accepted—one from Shiga Prefecture and one from Kanagawa Prefecture.

This training program is designed to cultivate individuals who can demonstrate leadership in regional infectious disease crisis response. It focuses on developing the competencies required for such roles, including leadership and management skills, specialized knowledge in infectious disease control and coordination and communication abilities across agencies. The program is based on a competency framework developed through a 2023 Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare research project (Kokudo Group Study 23HA2016) and later redefined by the ministry.

The 2025 Trainees are Ryota Kobayashi – Shiga Prefecture, Tokyo Headquarters and Mika Morioka – Kanagawa Prefecture, Health and Medical Bureau, Health Crisis and Infectious Disease Control Division.

Trainees expressed their commitment to deepening their understanding of health crisis management, strengthening coordination and management skills and building networks through active discussion and collaboration.

They also shared their personal experiences of how unpredictable infectious disease crises can be, emphasizing the need for swift and appropriate responses.

## **SIP Phase 3 Public Symposium Held**

### **— Utilizing Generative AI in Building an Integrated Healthcare System**

On **April 30, 2025**, JIHS hosted a public symposium as part of the **Strategic Innovation Promotion Program (SIP) Phase 3**, focusing on the theme: **“Utilizing Generative AI in Building an Integrated Healthcare System.”**

The event was held in a hybrid format, combining an in-person venue with Zoom live streaming, and attracted over 700 participants, making it a great success.

The symposium began with opening remarks by Director Takei, followed by a welcome address from President Kokudo. Dr. Ryōzō Nagai, President of Jichi

Medical University and Program Director (PD) of the SIP initiative, provided an overview of the project and reflected on its progress to date.

Eight research and development leaders presented their work on applying generative AI in various healthcare domains, including the clinical decision support, hospital operations and disaster response.

These presentations showcased the potential of generative AI to enhance healthcare delivery and drew significant interest from attendees.



A lively panel discussion followed, centered on the theme:

**“Toward Social Implementation of Domestic Medical LLMs/LMMs.”**

Participants shared insights on future prospects for generative AI in healthcare, challenges in implementation and strategies for integration into clinical practice.

In the evening, attendees had the opportunity to view medical generative AI models and applications developed through the project, and to engage in direct dialogue with the research teams.

This session provided a valuable chance for participants to explore the technology hands-on and exchange ideas with developers.



The symposium highlighted the steady progress of generative AI in the medical field and reaffirmed the need for continued collaboration and validation to achieve real-world implementation.

 **Video recordings and the full program** are available on the **JIHS SIP website**.

# AYA Week Events Held to Support Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer Patients

*(Contributed by the AYA Support Team)*

**AYA** stands for **Adolescent and Young Adult**, referring to individuals aged 15 to 39. The AYA Support Team at JIHS is a multidisciplinary group dedicated to addressing the unique concerns and challenges faced by cancer patients in this age group.

Although cancer is more common in older adults, approximately 20,000 people in the AYA age group are diagnosed with cancer each year in Japan. However, awareness and support for AYA cancer patients remain insufficient.

AYA Week is held annually in March across medical institutions nationwide to promote understanding and support for AYA cancer patients.

At JIHS, events were held from March 7 to March 17 in the central atrium, including support flag posters, art exhibits and educational materials.

These displays aimed to deepen public understanding and empathy for AYA patients.



AYAweek アトリウム展示 (応援フラッグ)



AYA支援チームメンバーと応援フラッグ

# Choral Concert by Alumni of the Kunitachi College of Music Junior High School Choir Club

*(Contributed by the Committee for Improving the Quality of Medical Care)*

As part of its ongoing efforts to provide comfort, healing, and joy to patients, the Committee for Improving the Quality of Medical Care regularly organizes volunteer concerts.

On March 14, 2025, a special choral concert was held featuring alumni of the **Kunitachi College of Music Junior High School Choir Club**, a group with a history of participating in national competitions and receiving numerous awards.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when medical staff faced immense challenges, the choir delivered a remote performance of “Song of Life” despite school closures. Their heartfelt singing deeply moved many staff members and provided emotional support.

The choir’s bright and pure voices captivated the audience. During a song with original choreography, patients joined in by moving their bodies and singing along.

Patients who couldn’t attend in person participated remotely from their hospital rooms, allowing them to experience the uplifting atmosphere.

Both patients and staff were touched by the music, and the concert was warmly received. JIHS plans to continue offering such performances as moments of healing in everyday life.



# Introduction to Child Psychiatry Department at Kohnodai Hospital

*(Contributed by Dr. Masa Hide Usami, Head of Child Psychiatry)*

The Child Psychiatry Department at Kohnodai Hospital was established in 1948 (Showa 23) and has long provided specialized care for children—from infants to junior high school students—with mental health conditions.

The department offers both outpatient and inpatient care. It includes a dedicated 45-bed psychiatric open ward. An in-hospital classroom is operated in collaboration with Ichikawa City Elementary and Junior High Schools, allowing hospitalized children to continue their education.

Main Conditions Treated are anxiety disorders, depression, eating disorders, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), conversion and dissociative disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In recent years, there has been an increase in children seeking care for school refusal, social withdrawal, developmental disorders and eating disorders.

Treatment primarily involves outpatient psychotherapy, but inpatient care is provided when necessary. The inpatient program emphasizes a natural, healing environment, multidisciplinary support and collaboration with the in-hospital classroom.

The goal is not only to treat psychiatric symptoms but also to foster emotional growth in children.

The department places particular emphasis on group therapy activities aimed at increasing social engagement. These include excursions, camps and other experiential programs.

These activities help children build confidence, develop interpersonal skills, and reconnect with society in a supportive setting.



## **Related YouTube Channel:**

Children's Mental Health Lab – Kohnodai Hospital Child Psychiatry Department



# April 25 — World Malaria Day

**Theme for 2025:**

**“Malaria Ends with Us: Reinvest, Reimagine, Reignite.”**

To commemorate **World Malaria Day**, the Tropical Medicine and Malaria Research Department at JIHS organized a poster exhibition in the atrium of the central building of the National Center for Global Health and Medicine.

The posters showcased current global malaria trends and research activities and achievements of the department.

A powerful calligraphy piece by Dr. Kano, Head of the Tropical Medicine and Malaria Research Department, was also displayed.

The featured character for the year was “走” (**Run**).

Dr. Kano commented:

“The JIHS Tropical Medicine and Malaria Research Department will continue to run forward—strengthening Japan’s infectious disease crisis management system and contributing to the global eradication of malaria.”



# “The Therapy Dogs Came from Hyogo!”

## — A Joyful Day Realizing a Five-Year Dream

Since around 2019, JIHS had been exploring the idea of introducing therapy dogs to support pediatric patients. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person visits were not possible. Instead, JIHS maintained online interactions with dogs from the Japan Rescue Association for five years.



Following the Noto Peninsula Earthquake, the association shared photos and stories of disaster rescue dogs in action, continuing their engagement with the hospital.

On the day of the visit, the atmosphere was filled with excitement. Toddlers pulled handmade toys with dog pictures, pretending to walk them. Children ran around joyfully, crawled through hoops with the dogs, and even lay down on mats beside them. Families had moments of peace, touching the dogs gently and enjoying quiet time.

Each person—whether a small child, teenager, parent, or staff member—was enveloped in a warm and gentle atmosphere, with laughter echoing through the playroom.

The presence of the dogs brought comfort and courage to children, a safe emotional space where they could be themselves and a unique form of healing and reassurance that only therapy dogs can provide.

“The feeling of ‘I want to see them again!’ gives children strength to face tomorrow.”

This event served as a stepping stone toward regular therapy dog visits at the hospital. The organizers expressed deep gratitude to the multidisciplinary teams across departments who supported this new initiative.

 **Learn more about the Japan Rescue Association:**

<https://www.japan-rescue.com>

# Special Edition of the Bureau of Global Health

## Cooperation Newsletter Completed

*(Contributed by Masahiko Hachiya, Director of Operations Planning, International Medical Cooperation Bureau)*

The Bureau of Global Health Cooperation, established in 1986, has worked for nearly 40 years to improve healthcare in low- and middle-income countries. Its activities include dispatching experts through JICA and WHO and conducting research and training programs.

As of March 2025, the bureau has conducted over 6,200 overseas dispatches to 161 countries and welcomed more than 6,400 trainees from 139 countries

At the time of writing, 10 experts are stationed long-term in 7 countries, and 6 more are scheduled to depart this fiscal year.



Director Hachiya reflects:

“There’s no single answer to how we should confront health crises. But the experience of working in resource-limited settings—where supplies, information, and personnel are scarce—can absolutely be applied when crises occur here in Japan.”

With the launch of JIHS, the bureau is committed to redoubling its efforts as part of the new organization.

To mark the founding of JIHS, a special edition of the newsletter titled, “**Bureau of Global Health Cooperation and Health Crisis Response**”, has been published. It features historical records and photos, interviews with key personnel and insightful columns.

The goal is to foster public interest in global health issues and the role of international medical cooperation.



## International Garden — A Place of Peace and Beauty

Located within the grounds of the hospital, the **International Garden** is a beloved space for both visitors and inpatients to relax and enjoy nature.

For many years, volunteers have lovingly maintained the garden by planting seasonal flowers, weeding and providing regular care.

Throughout the year, the garden showcases a variety of vibrant blooms. In April, the garden reaches a peak of beauty with colorful tulips in full bloom, delighting all who pass by.

🌷 “We invite you to pause during your visit and enjoy a moment of healing among the flowers.”

