

We are 'Min-Iren'

"Japan Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions" (MIN-IREN)





Mission Statement

Japan Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions (MIN-IREN)

We, the Min-Iren aim to provide health care and welfare services without discrimination or inequality.

Amidst the devastation of post-war Japan, medical professionals, workers, farmers and people in the community worked together to establish “democratic clinics” throughout the country, following in the footsteps of the proletarian clinics of pre-war days. This led to the founding of the Japan Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions (Min-Iren) in 1953, as the “medical institutions of the people.”

Since then, we have campaigned for human equality, and we have provided health care to meet the pressing needs of the people. We later expanded our undertakings to the fields of nursing care and welfare. Putting ourselves in the position of the patients, we have promoted kind and good quality health care, viewing illness in the light of their lives and their work, and we have tackled the social problems of the time that relate to the lives and health of the people. We have also worked jointly with our Kyodososhiki to campaign for the betterment of people’s livelihoods and social security systems, and to achieve peace and democracy.

Our activities are not profit-oriented. We have established collective ownership of our institutions and strive for democratic management.

The Constitution of Japan enshrines the sovereignty of the people and their right to live in peace, and stipulates that the most fundamental human right is that of the age-old struggle of humanity to be free, and all that it encompasses, to be held for all time inviolate.

Upholding the principles of this Constitution, we commit ourselves to further developing our past achievements and aim to attain a society in which all people are respected as equal.

— We respect human rights, promote health care, nursing care and welfare as a joint undertaking, and protect the lives and the health of the people.

— Working together with people in communities and workplace neighborhoods, and by strengthening our partnership with medical and welfare institutions, we strive to create communities where people can live their lives free of worry.

— We respect academic freedom, endeavor to develop academic research and cultural activities, and foster a rich sense of humanity in the medical professionals who work alongside people in the community.

— We firmly maintain scientific and democratic management and administration, protect our institutions, and aim to improve the lives and establish the rights of medical, nursing and welfare workers.

— Through clearly defining the responsibilities of the State and corporations, we continue to strive to make the right of social security services a reality.

— We oppose all war policies, for they destroy the lives and the health of humankind, and we work towards abolishing nuclear weapons, as well as maintaining peace and protecting the environment.

In order to achieve these goals, we build solidarity among countless individuals and organizations, promote international exchanges, and work hand in hand with our Kyodososhiki.

February 27, 2010

The 39th General Assembly of the Japan Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions
(Min-Iren)

Japan Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions

The Japan Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions (Min-Iren) is a national organization consisting of over 1,700 affiliate health care, nursing care and pharmacy institutions, with approximately 80,000 staff including 3,200 doctors. As in the opening sentence of the 'Min-Iren Mission Statement', the institutions aim to provide health care and welfare services without discrimination or inequality.

Since the formation of the Japan Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions in 1953, we have campaigned for 'human equality' through striving for improved social security to protect the human rights of the people of Japan, in response to a compelling need for good health care. Furthermore, we have carried out peace activities to promote a society with no nuclear weapons and we have opposed wars, as they destroy the health and precious lives of people.

There are currently Min-Iren affiliated hospitals, clinics, pharmacies and nursing care institutions located in all prefectures of Japan, providing services from health and preventative care to treatment and home care.

There are 3.5 million people involved in Medical Health Cooperatives and *Kenko Tomonokai* (Health Societies), working in each area in cooperation with the health care and nursing care fields to support hospitals, clinics and nursing care institutions. Together with health care and nursing care professionals, they work to ensure that towns and cities are always places where people can live their lives free of worry.

Over the past 10 years, there has been a raft of structural reforms in Japan as a result of neoliberalist policies. The lives of Japanese people have been seriously affected, with unemployment intensifying and poverty and social disparity increasing.

In the health care and nursing care fields, the cost of social security has decreased by 220 billion yen each year, and through the commercialization of the market, there are more and more Japanese people who do not have access to the medical or nursing care systems, such as those who cannot receive health care or nursing care because they cannot afford to pay expensive insurance premiums or pay the high fees they are required to pay after receiving treatment – despite the fact that it should be 'insurance for everyone'.

The government has neglected this reality, and together with bureaucrats and business leaders, has called upon the mass media and academics to encourage the 'individual responsibility concept', continuing to lay down policies where patients and users are consumers, and health care and nursing care are 'products'.

In response to all of this, the Japan Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions has put forward a 'revitalisation plan for health care and nursing' as a part of a new welfare state model, and has fought along with healthcare groups, nursing care groups, trade unions and other progressive citizens' groups.

Based on what is happening at the frontline, the Federation has started 'doctor/nurse/carer wave' activities at various locations around the country in support of the right of social security, achieving an increase in the specified numbers of students allowed in departments of medicine. This is a result that will remain prominent in Japanese health care movement history.

Each time the Japan Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions has experienced a challenge or a trial over the years, we have had discussions based on our mission statement, and then created new policies, put them into practice and reviewed them. And then what has become clear in the course of the valuable process of putting them into practice and the challenges that we have faced, is the importance of Articles 9 and 25 of the Constitution of Japan.

Japan is now starting to become a place where government and health care, and social security policies can be changed by the power of the people, as long as we are persistent in our efforts at the grass roots level in line with the will of the people.

With adherence to the Constitution of Japan at the forefront of its mission statement, and human rights as the central pillar, the Japan Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions is continuing its activities with the aim of creating a society where all people are equally respected.

Overview of the 'Min-Iren' Movement

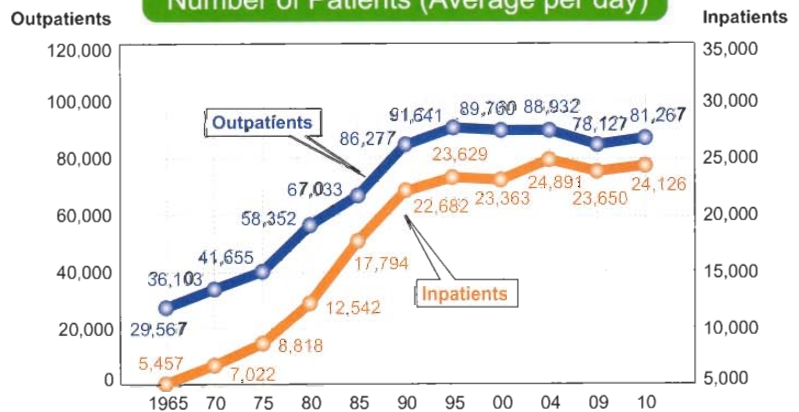
The MIN-IREN Movement:
3,300 Doctors, 24,000 Nurses,
3.5 million Supporters

MIN-IREN facilities have, about 68,000 staff members in total, including 3,300 medical doctors, 350 dentists and 24,000 nurses. As a whole, this equates to 1.6% of all doctors, 2.0% of all nurses and 1.5% of all hospital beds in Japan. Every day, more than 81,000 patients come to have check-ups and about 24,000 are hospitalized in MIN-IREN hospitals.



Furthermore, there are approximately 3.15 million people involved in Medical Health Cooperatives and *Kenko Tomonokai* (Health Societies) who carry out activities with the Min-Iren in the areas of health, health care and welfare, so that towns and cities will continue to be places where people can live their lives free of worry.

Number of Patients (Average per day)



Number of Institutions and Staff



Healthcare, Nursing Care and Welfare Activities

Our activities have the fundamental principle and purpose of achieving a society where health care and welfare can be provided without discrimination or inequality.

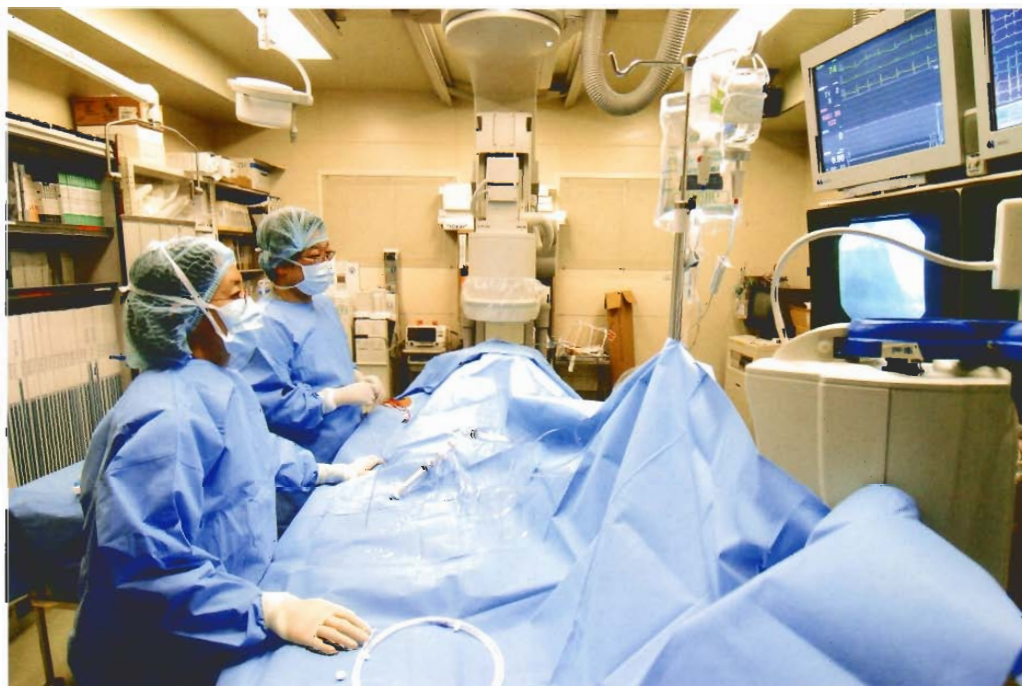
These activities are carried out in the health care and welfare fields, with the aim of making the principles of the Constitution of Japan a reality. From this standpoint, we have focused on the societal problems of the current era which affect the health and lives of the people, for example death from overwork, asbestos poisoning, Minamata disease, health care for atomic bomb survivors and drug-induced diseases etc.

In order to achieve our purpose and mission, we believe it is important to work in tandem with other organizations (*Kenko Tomonokai* (Health Societies) and Medical Health Cooperatives etc). These other cooperative organizations are our partners – working actively in areas such as health care, welfare and management.

Furthermore, we try to publicize what is going on at the forefront of the health care system, as well as the reality of our experiences in our daily work, and the problems that are behind these issues. Our approach is to try and solve these problems by making them issues in the public arena. These activities are publicized through the mass media, and are a way of influencing government agencies.



Conference



Cardiac Catheter Surgery

Action on Social Security



Currently Japan is experiencing a situation in which it could be said that poverty and social disparity is increasing, and that health care and nursing care systems are collapsing. This is having a serious effect on the people of Japan since it is a risk to people's lives and quality of life, and is creating a disparity in the health of the people overall. In order to overcome this, it will be important to have mutual cooperation with those in the health care and welfare sectors, and through cooperative activities, create localities and local governments where health care and welfare are highly regarded.

Furthermore, we believe that the principle of social security should be that social security costs are the responsibility of the government and of companies, and this is recognized as an outcome of people's efforts throughout the world. We are continuing to try to make the right of social security a reality through achieving a reduction in the excessive public financial burden.



Tent city for jobless - End of year

Support Services for Disasters

In January 1995 there was the Great Hanshin-Awaji (Kobe) Earthquake, and in March 2011 there was the Great East Japan (Tohoku) Earthquake and Tsunami – two large-scale disasters that devastated Japan. For the Great East Japan Earthquake in particular, extensive damage was caused not only by the Earthquake but by the tsunami that followed. There were over 25,000 deaths or people reported missing, and there are still 117,000 evacuees (as of May 2011).



The Great Hanshin-Awaji (Kobe) Earthquake – January 1995

In response to these unprecedented disasters, our support activities involved sending a great number of staff (mainly doctors and nurses) to the areas to provide health care to the victims and to visit evacuation centers.



The Great East Japan (Tohoku) Earthquake and Tsunami – March 2011

Furthermore, there is still no end in sight for the radioactive contamination situation caused by the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant disaster following the Great East Japan Earthquake. This nuclear power plant accident is the most significant nuclear accident since the USA's Three Mile Island Accident and the former USSR's Chernobyl Disaster. The residents of this area have lost their homes and livelihoods to the environmental pollution caused by the radiation, and work in the agriculture, livestock farming and fishing industries is largely impossible.



Consultation and Information Day for victims of the Great East Japan (Tohoku) Earthquake and Tsunami – May 2011

Having nuclear power plants in a country such as Japan with such frequent earthquakes is too dangerous, and along with many other groups, we have been continuing our activities to demand that the government decommission the plants.

Activities for Peace, Abolition of Nuclear Weapons and Environmental Protection

Some of the natural responsibilities of those involved in health care, nursing care and welfare are to act for peace, and protest against wars because they take lives; and furthermore to protect the environment through such things as prevention of global warming.

We play our part in various ways, such as contributing to the success of the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs, and sending representatives to the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) Review Meeting in New York, as well as Peace Schools and the Bicycle Rally for Peace. In particular, since 2004, we have been providing support for the struggle of the residents of Nago City, Okinawa, who have been opposing the move of an American Base to Henoko Bay, and over a period of 6 years, over 2500 staff have participated from all over the country.



NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) Review Meeting – May 2010



Support activities in Henoko (Okinawa Prefecture)



Bicycle Rally for Peace

MIN-IREN//
 Japan Federation of Democratic Medical Institutions
 Yushima 2-4-4, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo, 113-8465 Japan
 TEL + (81)3-5842-6451
 FAX + (81)3-5842-6460
 URL: <http://www.aik.co.jp/c-pro/min-iren>
 E-mail: min-iren@min-iren.gr.jp