

JNA News Release

Japanese Nursing Association

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Leadership of the Japanese Nursing Association (JNA) in response to Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic: Collaboration with Government and impact on media

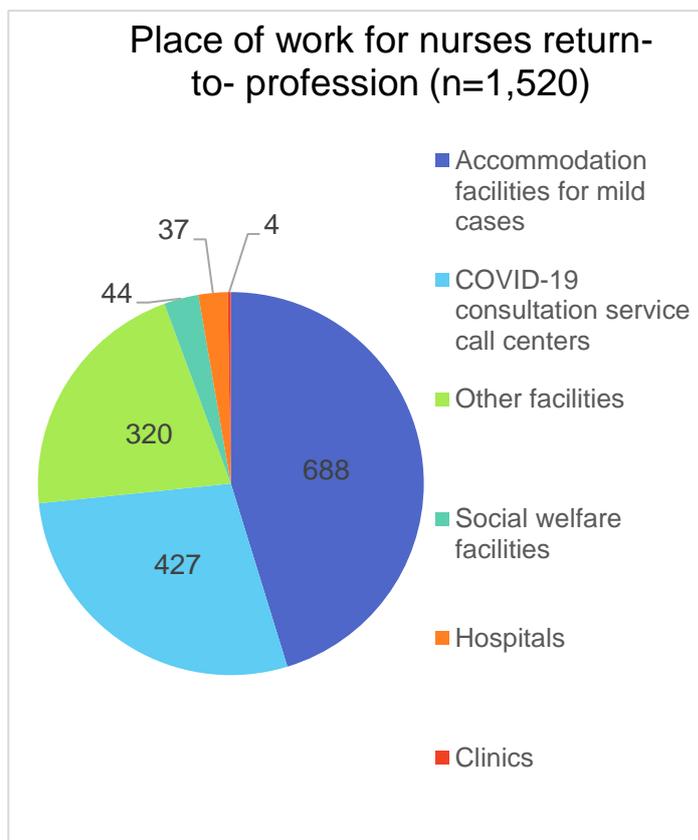
In response to the first wave of COVID-19, JNA made four approaches as follows: 1. Securing nurses, 2. Supporting frontline nurses, 3. Making requests to the Government, and 4. Connecting frontline nurses with the public.

1. Securing nurses

In the face of COVID-19, JNA works to secure nurses quickly and sufficiently, due to surge needs for nurses at healthcare facilities. On April 8, the day after the Government declared a state of emergency, JNA sent an email to 50,000 nurses who are not currently working to return to profession. The Nurse Center of each prefecture, where provides job placement free-of-charge support received many inquiries. There were 3,383 job applicants, and 2,095 of them were referred to facilities. As a result, 1,520 nurses returned to profession, and played their roles in such as "accommodation facilities for mild cases," "hospitals," "COVID-19 consultation service call centers. (as of August 25, 2020)

Many healthcare facilities in Japan had tight nursing workforce before the COVID-19 situation. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, more nurses were required to provide nursing care to patients tested positive and with onset symptoms, and to prevent in-hospital infection. Under these circumstances, JNA has worked closely with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Nurse Centers, and the prefectural nursing associations to secure nurses. The cooperation system was further strengthened by then Prime Minister's positive evaluation of the JNA's effort for

nurses to return to profession, at a press conference after the declaration of a state of emergency.



The Nurse Center provide careful job matching to nurses who wish to return to profession, based on their work experiences. In order for nurses to return to profession comfortably, the Nursing Centers support nurses by providing courses on infection control and clinical training programs before returning to

profession. Toward the second and third waves of COVID-19, meticulous support is continuously provided, including training before return to profession in order to close the gap between job seekers and employing facilities.

- * More stories about support for return-to-profession by prefecture nursing associations and activities of returned nurses can be found on ICN COVID-19 From the Frontlines page on ICN's website: "Nurses Return to work to support nurses working on the frontline"
<https://www.2020yearofthenurse.org/story/nurses-return-to-work-to-support-nurses-working-on-the-frontline/>

* Nurse Centers

Nurse Centers were established based on the "Act on Assurance of Work Forces of Nurses and Other Medical Experts (the Act)," which was enacted in 1992. Nurse Centers consist of the "Central Nurse Center" and the "Prefectural Nurse Centers." The "Central Nurse Center" is operated by the JNA, under designation by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. The "Prefectural Nurse Centers" are operated by Prefectural Nursing Associations, under designation by the Governors of the Prefectures.

The "Central Nurse Center" manages and operates the free-of-charge job placement website (called e-Nurse Center), and undertakes service focused on providing support for the Prefectural Nurse Centers. In the meantime, the "Prefectural Nurse Centers" utilize information from the Central Nurse Center, and operate free-of-charge job placement service for nurses (called nurse bank service) as measures for recruiting nursing professionals, leveraging their strength to be located in each of the 47 prefectures. The two types of Nurse Centers operate their service through detailed two-way cooperation.

2. Support frontline nurses

JNA works to support frontline nurses in the field. The three key measures were 1) consultation service, 2) information provision, and 3) distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE).

1) Consultation service for nurses

Since March, JNA provides consultation service about risks, stress, infection control caused by COVID-19 by telephone and e-mail. In order to strengthen support for nurses who are exposed to everyday stress due to the outbreak of infection, a general contact counter deals with four areas; (1) infection control, (2) work, (3) mental health, and (4) others since April 20. We also obtained cooperation to this service from highly specialized nurses, such as certified nurses for infection

control and certified nurse specialists for psychiatric mental health nursing.

The number of emails requesting consultation was 781 (as of September 14, 2020). We received many inquiries including from small sized hospitals and long-term care facilities. This identified that small-sized hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, and other facilities with no nurses specialized in infection control faced challenges on infection prevention and control measure against COVID-19. In order to prevent the spread of infection, JNA considers to facilitate training of the Certified Nurses in Infection Control and utilization of those highly specialized nurses.

Through consultation on work style, issues were identified including securing substitute staff for pregnant nurses, reduction of physical burden and

risk of infection during commuting, subsidizing accommodation expenses for commuting from hotels without going home in order to minimize the risk of infection to family members living together,

and the payment of risk allowance. We made requests to the Government incorporating these consultation topics.

Table. Main topics of consultation by email

Category	Cases
Infection control	305
Work style	169
Mental health	68
Opinions/requests	120
Consultation service for infection prevention (April 6 to 20, 2020)	119
	781

(as of April 20 to September 14, 2020)

* More stories about COVID-19 response of Certified Nurses in Infection Control in Japan can be found on ICN COVID-19 From the Frontlines page: “COVID-19 response of Certified Nurses in Infection Control – Japan” <https://www.2020yearofthenurse.org/story/covid19-response-of-certified-nurses-in-infection-control-japan/>

* Please refer to the following page on JNA’s website for information on Certified Nurse and Certified Nurse Specialist: “Nursing Education in Japan” <https://www.nurse.or.jp/jna/english/nursing/education.html>

2) Information provision

Since early April, JNA has provided materials and videos containing how to put on and off PPE and care provision for patients with COVID-19 on our website. As of June 24, there are about 82,000 views. In addition, we published materials and FAQs that briefly summarize information required for the different target groups including nurse managers, nurses engaging in perinatal care, and nurses engaging in home-based care. The information keeps updated as needed, so that anyone can easily refer to our website whenever necessary.

3) Support for frontline nurses including distribution of PPE through partnership with companies

JNA distributed PPE in partnership with companies to healthcare facilities and visiting nursing stations. JNA received donations from companies including masks, gowns and face shields as well as monetary donations. We utilize these for frontline nurses to cope with the shortage of PPE, while making the relevant request to the Government. Distribution was made through prefectural nursing associations. We continue to utilize the sponsored PPE for securing and supplying necessary equipment based on the actual local situations, and to expand the scope of use of monetary donations in support for nursing schools and infected nurses.

3. Making requests to the Government

JNA made requests to the Government in order to ensure the safety of nurses by identifying needs and issues in the frontline through the opinions received by our consultation service. We have made 27 requests (as of September 25,2020), including securing supply of PPE to healthcare facilities, nursing homes and visiting nursing stations, the payment of risk allowance to nurses coping with COVID-19, the prevention of discrimination, prejudice and reputational damage to nurses, and securing of substitute staff for pregnant nurses taking leaves. Based on our requests, the

Government implemented necessary measures including the payment of reward money for healthcare workers, dissemination through the "Government publicity" concerning the prohibition of discrimination and prejudice against healthcare workers, and the revision by notification of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act in order to restrict work and job attendance of pregnant workers on condition of advice from a physician or midwife. Our efforts contributed to the attainment of these measures.

4. Connecting frontline nurses with the public

JNA works to support frontline nurses who are faced with challenging situations in all settings. JNA held a press conference at an early stage of infection outbreak and emphasized to the public about the tight condition at healthcare settings and issues faced by nurses. At the press conference, JNA's President Fukui talked about the problems of discrimination and stigma against healthcare workers, and asked the public to cooperate in preventing the outbreak of infection, to understand healthcare workers, and to cooperate with them.

In Japan, discrimination and prejudice against healthcare workers emerged following the outbreak of COVID-19, such that the children of nurses were not accepted at nurseries or that nurses were refused to take taxi due to the fear of infection among the public. Through our approach, the Government expressed respect for all healthcare workers who were at the frontline of coping with COVID-19, and emphasized that it would make all efforts to support healthcare workers who were defending the healthcare settings.



JNA's President Fukui at a press conference at the Japan National Press Club

On April 22, JNA was invited to the Japan National Press Club to hold a press conference on the current situation of nurses supporting COVID-19 patients at the frontline, and asked cooperation in order to avoid overwhelming healthcare system. These measures have deepened the understanding of healthcare workers among the media and the public.

Q What is Japan National Press Club?

Japan National Press Club (JNPC/Nippon Kisha Club) is Japan's only truly national press club which counts as its members all the national and local daily newspapers, broadcasting companies and news agencies. Here in its well-appointed facilities, journalists can meet important and interesting news sources, Japanese and foreign. Since its foundation in 1969 JNPC has been consistently operating as an independent organization, of the press, by the press and for the press, with no financial support from the government.

Approximately 200 professional events are organized annually by JNPC involving Japanese and foreign guest speakers: politicians, businessmen, academics and other news makers and opinion formers. JNPC's professional events include press conferences, press luncheons and study sessions.

Source: Japan National Press Club, <https://www.jnpc.or.jp/english/jnp>

As part of the Nursing Now campaign, JNA also conducted a hash tag campaign using SNS, "#Nursing Now _What I Can Do Now," with the aim of raising public awareness for infection prevention and avoiding overwhelming healthcare facilities by sending out the messages of empathy and encouragement to nurses working at the frontline. There are 1,042 posts (as of September 14, 2020), and helping nurses re-recognize the value of professions and feel rewarded and motivated by knowing the voice of the public.

* More stories about JNA's Nursing Now activities can be found on ICN COVID-19 From the Frontlines page: "Japanese Nursing Association Nursing Now activities"

<https://www.2020yearofthenurse.org/story/japanese-nursing-association-nursing-now-activities/>



JNA's effort toward the next wave of COVID-19

Experiences in the first wave revealed that nurses working in different settings felt various burdens, anxiety, stress both in workplace and at home under the outbreak. JNA will take supportive measures in the following four pillars toward the next wave, so that problems can be resolved at an early stage.

1) Support for creating risk-resilient workplace

This includes ensuring infection prevention and control management throughout the workplace, securing

stable and flexible supply of nurses, and strengthening the mental health support system for nurses, along with supporting nursing managers to take these measures.

- 2) Maintenance of work-life balance (WLB) for nurses during the COVID-19 outbreak
- 3) Strengthening social approaches to foster sound understanding of healthcare and nursing among public
- 4) Policy proposal to promote a healthcare system transformation which ensures more stable provision of health/ long-term care services

Reference

- Information on COVID-19 in Japan
 - Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare: *About Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)*
https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/newpage_00032.html (Accessible at July 13 2020)