

JNA News Release

Japanese Nursing Association

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Nursing Day and Nursing Week events held in Japan

May 12 is known as “Nursing Day” in Japan, and the week containing May 12, from Sunday to Saturday, is also set as “Nursing Week”. During this week, various events have been taking place nationwide each year since 1991. We introduce the background to the establishment of Nursing Day in Japan and an overview of the event organized by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) and the Japanese Nursing Association (JNA) on May 8 this year, as well as events organized by prefectural nursing associations.

Establishment of Nursing Day in Japan

In 1965, the International Council of Nurses (ICN) established May 12 as International Nurses Day, the anniversary of Florence Nightingale’s birth, the founder of modern nursing.

In Japan, each of us also need to share the same spirit of nursing, caring and helping one another in order to support our aging society in the 21st century. With the hope of nurturing this spirit in people throughout the society regardless of age or gender, the Ministry of Health and Welfare (at the time) established Nursing Day in 1990. It was triggered by the campaign conducted by citizens and experts wishing to establish a Nursing Day.

FY2022 Nursing Day and Nursing Week events

The year 2020 marked the 30th anniversary of Nursing Day in Japan. In the light of an ever declining birthrate and aging population, one in eighteen people over the age of 18 need to be nurses in order to maintain the health care and nursing delivery system. To this end, Nursing Day campaigns have been focusing more on promoting the attractiveness of nursing to youths since FY2021.

This year, the MHLW and the JNA co-hosted a Nursing Day and Nursing Week event on May 8 in Tokyo under the theme of “Nurse as a professional who protects Lives and Living.” We organized a talk session on the attractive aspects of nursing as a professional career for younger generations who are aspiring to pursue a career in nursing. We also made an animated movie of “*an unforgettable nursing episode*” submitted by a nurse working on site, and unveiled a Nursing Day character and logo. *1

Up to now, the project “*an unforgettable nursing episode*”



invited nurses and the public to submit heart-warming episodes experienced at a nursing scene. This year, we revamped the project and asked nurses working on site to share stories of their daily practice illustrating the expertise and attractiveness of nursing profession, targeting the next generation, under the theme of “Nursing Profession who protect and support lives.” Three episodes were awarded out of approximately 600 episodes. The first prize was awarded to “From a Southern Island” by Yoshiya Uchida, a male nurse² working in a remote island of Japan. While working at the emergency center of a general hospital, Mr. Uchida came to believe that by the time a person comes to the hospital and is admitted, it’s too late—the best thing is that people don’t need to come to the hospital. He then decided to work in preventive medicine and moved to the island. His episode describes the efforts he puts in as a nurse for the health of islanders.

We hope that these episodes about nursing will be inspiring to young people and encourage them to pursue a career in nursing in the future.

Operation of PR Buses

In Nursing Day and Nursing Week in May, to promote Nursing Day projects to the wider public, PR buses with the Nursing Day logo and character have been and are to run in four regions across the country over the four-year period between FY2021 and FY2024.

In conjunction with the touring wrapped buses, events are organized targeting students, such as “Nursing class at



junior-high and high school” (see below), with the hope of encouraging even more youths to pursue a career in nursing. In FY2022, marking the second year of operation, three buses toured a total of 14 prefectures in the Hokkaido–Tohoku region and part of the Kanto–Koshinetsu region.

Events by Prefectural Nursing Associations

Prefectural nursing associations also organize unique events and campaigns to promote Nursing Day each year. Following are some example of unique events.

- ◆ Nursing class at junior-high and high school: Let’s Talk Together
Nurses and midwives working in hospitals and other health care settings share stories about their jobs and experiences in nursing with junior-high and high school students. Various classes are held each year, where the students use a stethoscope to listen to the sound of their own heart or that of a friend’s, and learn how to hold a baby.
- ◆ Experience of nursing for junior-high and high school students
Healthcare and welfare facilities open the doors to local residents, mainly junior-high and high school students, so that the participants could learn the work of nursing through institution tours and experiences

of very basic nursing care. The event provides a rare opportunity for the public to interact directly with health care professionals. At present, an increasing number of facilities hold such events not only during Nursing Week but also during summer vacation and year round.

We will continue to do our best to provide opportunity for community to know about nursing, promote the attractiveness of nursing profession in various settings and increase the significance of nursing through Nursing Day and Nursing Week.

*1: Nursing Day character and logo



Starting in 2022, Kango-chan is the character for Nursing Day and Nursing Week projects in Japan. The design was selected through a rigorous screening process from 746 submission through a public call. We also redesigned the Nursing Day logo. Kango-chan will serve as a messenger to promote the attractiveness of nursing to youths, the future nursing workforce.

- **Name:** Kango-chan
- **Concept:** The Nursing Day character acts as a bridge to the future of nursing and fulfills the dream of youths who aim to be nurses

*2: Ratio of male/female nurses in Japan

Male: 8.1% (104,365 Nurses) , Female: 91.9% (1,176,546 Nurses)

(Report on Public Health Administration and Services FY2020, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)