

Basic Law on Suicide Countermeasures*

(Law No. 85 of 2006)

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CHAPTER I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

(Purpose)

Article 1.

In light of the fact that it has become an urgent challenge to take countermeasures to address the situation where the number of deaths by suicide has remained at a high level in Japan in recent years, this law sets forth a basic philosophy regarding suicide countermeasures, clarifies the responsibilities of the national government, local public entities and others, and stipulates fundamental matters for suicide countermeasures, in an effort to realize a society in which no one will be driven to take their own life. The purpose of this law is to prevent suicide and enhance support for the relatives, etc., of suicide victims by comprehensively promoting suicide measures, and thereby contribute to the creation of a society in which the people in Japan can live healthy, meaningful lives.

(Basic Philosophy)

Article 2.

1. With the aim of ensuring that all people are valued as human beings and are able to live meaningful lives with hope for the future based upon their zest for living, suicide

countermeasures must be implemented as comprehensive support for people's lives in a way that contributes to overcoming various factors that may interfere with the accomplishment of this aim and widely and appropriately establishing and enhancing the environment to assist and facilitate such support.

2. Suicide countermeasures must be implemented as a society-wide effort based on the fact that suicide should not be merely viewed as a personal problem, but rather involves various social factors behind it.

3. Consideration must be given to ensuring that suicide countermeasures are implemented not just from the perspective of mental health, but also in a way that is in line with the realities of suicide cases based on the fact that suicide involves various complex factors and contexts.

4. Suicide countermeasures must be implemented effectively by tailoring them to the stages of suicide prevention, responding to the risk of suicide and providing a post-event response for cases of both completed and attempted suicide.

5. Suicide countermeasures must be implemented on a comprehensive basis through the organic coordination of measures and policies related to health, medicine, welfare, education, labor and other relevant issues.

*Supplementary Information for The Present Trend of Suicide Prevention Policy in Japan (Suicide Policy Research 2017; 1:1-7)

(Responsibilities of the National Government and Local Public Entities)

Article 3.

1. The national government shall be responsible for comprehensively formulating and implementing suicide countermeasures in accordance with the basic philosophy stated in the preceding article (referred to in the next paragraph as the “Basic Philosophy”).

2. Local public entities shall be responsible for formulating and implementing policies regarding suicide countermeasures in cooperation with the national government, in light of the situation in the region in question and in accordance with the Basic Philosophy.

3. The national government shall offer advice and other assistance as necessary to local public entities so that such entities can fully meet their responsibilities under the preceding Paragraph.

(Responsibilities of Business Owners)

Article 4.

Business owners shall cooperate in suicide countermeasures that the national government and local public entities implement and shall endeavor to implement measures necessary to maintain the mental health of workers that they employ.

(Responsibilities of People in Japan)

Article 5.

The people in Japan shall endeavor to deepen their awareness and understanding of the importance of suicide countermeasures as a means of comprehensive support for living.

(Promotion of Understanding of People in Japan)

Article 6.

The national government and local public entities shall implement necessary actions to deepen the people’s understanding of suicide countermeasures through educational and PR activities.

(Suicide Prevention Week and Suicide Countermeasures Strengthening Month)

Article 7.

1. Suicide Prevention Week and Suicide Countermeasures Strengthening Month shall

be designated in order to deepen general awareness and understanding of the importance of suicide countermeasures among the people of Japan and to contribute to promoting suicide countermeasures on a comprehensive basis.

2. Suicide Prevention Week shall be from September 10 through September 16, and Suicide Countermeasures Strengthening Month shall be March.

3. During Suicide Prevention Week, the national government and local public entities shall widely promote awareness-raising activities and endeavor to introduce initiatives that are appropriate for such purposes.

4. During Suicide Countermeasures Strengthening Month, the national government and local public entities shall intensively promote suicide countermeasures and endeavor to implement counseling services and other initiatives that are appropriate for such purposes in mutual coordination and cooperation with related organizations and entities.

(Coordination and Cooperation of Related Parties)

Article 8.

In order to comprehensively and effectively pursue the implementation of suicide countermeasures, the national government, local public entities, medical institutions, business owners, schools (referring to schools provided for in article 1 of the School Education Act (Act No. 26 of 1947), excluding kindergartens and kindergarten divisions of special support education schools; hereinafter the same shall apply in article 17, paragraphs 1 and 3), private sector entities that conduct activities related to suicide countermeasures and other related parties shall cooperate with each other in a coordinated fashion.

(Consideration of Honor and Peace in Life)

Article 9.

The implementation of suicide countermeasures must be conducted with full consideration given to the honor and peace in life of those who commit suicide, those who survive suicide attempts, and their relatives, etc. and must not unduly violate such honor and peace in life.

(Legislative Measures, Etc.)

Article 10.

The government must implement necessary legislative, fiscal and other measures to achieve the purpose of this law.

(Annual Report)

Article 11.

The government must submit to the National Diet every year a written report that gives an overview of the suicide situation in Japan and suicide countermeasures implemented by the government.

CHAPTER II

COMPREHENSIVE SUICIDE COUNTERMEASURES POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PREFECTURAL PLANS ON SUICIDE COUNTERMEASURES, ETC.

(Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures
Policy Principles)

Article 12.

The government must set forth fundamental policy principles for basic, comprehensive suicide countermeasures (hereinafter referred to in the next article and article 23, paragraph 2, item 1 as the “Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures Policy Principles”) as guidelines for suicide countermeasures that the government should promote.

(Prefectural Plans on Suicide
Countermeasures)

Article 13.

1. Taking into consideration the Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures Policy Principles and in light of the actual situation in the respective regions, prefectural governments shall draw up plans on suicide countermeasures within the relevant prefectural regions (hereinafter referred to in the next paragraph and the next article as the “Prefectural Plans on Suicide Countermeasures”).

2. Taking into consideration the Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures Policy Principles and the Prefectural Plans on Suicide Countermeasures and in light of the

actual situation in the respective regions, municipalities shall draw up plans on suicide countermeasures within the relevant municipal regions (hereinafter referred to in the next article as the “Municipal Plans on Suicide Countermeasures”).

(Provision of Grants to Prefectures and
Municipalities)

Article 14.

In accordance with the provisions of ministerial ordinances of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the national government may give grants, within relevant budgetary limits, to prefectures and municipalities that implement initiatives and otherwise make comprehensive and effective efforts, etc., that are necessary in order to implement suicide countermeasures in response to the situation in the relevant regions based upon the Prefectural Plan on Suicide Countermeasures or Municipal Plan on Suicide Countermeasures, and such grants shall be appropriated toward costs and expenses arising from the implementation of such actions and other efforts, taking into consideration such matters as the contents of the suicide countermeasures to be promoted thereby.

CHAPTER III

BASIC POLICIES

(Promotion of Surveys and Research, etc., and

Development of Framework)

Article 15.

1. To contribute to the comprehensive and effective implementation of suicide countermeasures, the national government and local public entities shall promote surveys, research and verification, as well as utilization of the outcomes thereof, with respect to the actual situation surrounding suicide cases, ways to prevent suicides, what forms of support are desirable for relatives, etc., of suicide victims, what suicide countermeasures are required in response to the situation in the respective regions, the status of suicide countermeasures implementation, etc., or with respect to the maintenance and improvement of mental health, and shall collect, organize and provide information concerning, inter alia, advanced approaches to suicide countermeasures.

2. The national government and local public entities shall develop a framework to contribute to the effective and efficient implementation of measures under the preceding paragraph.

(Securing of Human Resources, etc.)

Article 16.

The national government and local public entities shall implement policies necessary to secure and train human resources for suicide prevention and to improve the quality of such human resources in coordination and cooperation with universities, advanced vocational schools and other related entities.

(Promotion of Education and Awareness-
Raising Related to Maintaining
Mental Health, etc.)

Article 17.

1. The national government and local public entities shall implement policies necessary for the promotion of education and awareness-raising regarding maintenance of the mental health of people in professional occupations, schools, regions, etc., and to develop a framework for counseling services and secure opportunities for business owners, school teachers and other persons to be educated regarding how to maintain the mental health of the people in Japan, etc.

2. When the national government and local

public entities implement policies as prescribed in the preceding paragraph that relate to universities or advanced vocational schools, special consideration must be given to the characteristics of the education provided at universities and advanced vocational schools.

3. Schools shall endeavor to offer to their pupils, students, etc., in cooperation with their parents, local communities and other related parties, education to contribute to fostering awareness of the significance of each of them living a life as a worthwhile human being in a spirit of mutual respect. Education should also be provided so they can acquire skills to cope with difficult or psychologically stressful situations etc., and shall provide other education related to the maintenance of the mental health of their pupils, students, etc.

(Development of Framework for Medical
Treatment Provision)

Article 18.

The national government and local public entities shall implement necessary policies so that prompt and appropriate medical care is provided to those at risk of committing suicide due to problems related to maintaining their mental health, including developing an environment that makes it easy for those with mental disorders to receive medical care from doctors with a great deal of knowledge and experience in mental health (referred to in the remainder of this article as “psychiatrists”); developing a framework to provide high quality and appropriate psychiatric treatment; securing proper coordination between psychiatrists and medical doctors who provide medical care for physical injury or disease in the early stages of such medical care; securing effective coordination among psychiatrists and medical doctors who provide emergency medical care; and ensuring good coordination among psychiatrists and other professionals in the field of psychological or health and welfare services, etc., private sector entities and other related parties involved in suicide countermeasure activities in that region.

(Development of Framework to Prevent
Suicide, etc.)

Article 19.

The national government and local public entities shall implement policies needed to develop and improve a framework for the early detection of those at high risk of committing suicide and respond appropriately to prevent suicides from occurring by providing counseling services or other forms of support.

(Support for Suicide Attempt Survivors, etc.)

Article 20.

The national government and local public entities shall implement policies needed to provide appropriate support to those who survive suicide attempts, etc., so that suicide attempts will not be repeated.

(Support for Relatives, etc., of Suicide Victims)

Article 21.

The national government and local public entities shall implement policies needed to provide appropriate support for relatives, etc., of suicide victims and survivors of suicide attempts to alleviate the serious psychological impact of suicide or suicide attempts on such individuals.

(Support for Activities by Private Sector Entities)

Article 22.

The national government and local public entities shall offer advice, introduce financial measures and implement other appropriate policies to support the actions of private sector entities for the prevention of suicide or in support of relatives, etc., of suicide victims, etc.

CHAPTER IV

SUICIDE COUNTERMEASURES COUNCIL, ETC.

(Council Establishment and Affairs under Jurisdiction)

Article 23.

1. The Suicide Countermeasures Council (hereinafter referred to as the “Council”) shall be established as a special organ within the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

2. The Council shall administer the following affairs:

- (1) Drafting of the Principles of the Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures Policy;
- (2) Coordination of related administrative organs needed for suicide countermeasures;
- (3) In addition to the matters provided in the two items above, deliberation on key matters related to suicide countermeasures and promotion of the implementation of suicide countermeasures.

(Organization, etc., of Council)

Article 24.

1. The Council shall be composed of a chairperson and members.

2. The chairperson shall be the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare.

3. The members shall be those persons designated by the Prime Minister pursuant to the recommendation of the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare from among Ministers of State other than the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare.

4. The Council shall have a secretary.

5. The Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare shall appoint the secretary from among employees of the related administrative organs.

6. The secretary shall support the chairperson and members regarding affairs under the jurisdiction of the Council.

7. In addition to the matters stipulated in each of the preceding paragraphs, necessary matters relating to the organization and operation of the Council shall be stipulated by a Cabinet Order.

(Establishment of Necessary Organs)

Article 25.

In addition to those provided for in the preceding two paragraphs, the government

shall work to develop the organs necessary for the promotion of suicide countermeasures.

SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS (excerpt)

(Effective Date)

Article 1.

This law shall come into force on the date

specified by a Cabinet Order within a period not exceeding six (6) months from the day of promulgation.

SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS (Law No. ___ of 2016) (excerpt)

(Effective Date)

Article 1.

This law shall come into force on April 1st, 2016, except for the provisions of the next paragraph,

which shall come into force on the date of promulgation.

Act for Establishment of Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (Act No. 97 of 1999) (excerpt)

Act for Establishment of Ministry of Health,
Labour and Welfare

(Affairs under Jurisdiction)

Article 4.

1. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare shall take charge of the following affairs in order to accomplish the duties set forth in paragraph 1 and paragraph 2 of the preceding article:

[snip]

(89-3) Affairs related to preparation and promotion of Comprehensive Suicide Countermeasures Policy Principles (referring to the fundamental policy principles provided for in article 12 of the Basic Law on Suicide Countermeasures (Law No. 85 of 2006);

[snip]

2. [snip]

3. [snip]

SECTION IV

SPECIAL ORGAN

(Suicide Countermeasures Council)

Article 16-2.

1. The Ministry shall set up the Suicide Countermeasures Council as the special organ to be established within the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare pursuant to provisions set forth in a separate law.

2. Matters concerning the Suicide Countermeasures Council shall be handled as stipulated in the Basic Law on Suicide Countermeasures (including orders issued thereunder).