

Nursing Care Assistant System

(Tokushima Version)

Lifelong Active Citizen Acceleration

Project for Active Seniors

Tokushima Prefecture



Background and Reason for the Project

According to the Population Estimates (as of October 1, 2018) by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the total population of Tokushima Prefecture is 736,000, of which 243,000 are aged over 65 years old. As a percentage, this translates to 33.1% of the total population of Tokushima aged over 65 (ranked 5th in the country), well above the national average of 28.1%, and it is estimated the rate will increase while the core workforce population, meaning the working age population (between 15 years old and 64 years old), will drastically decline.

Also, according to the Required Number of Care Worker Human Resources based on the 7th Period Insured Long-Term Care Service Plans (as of May 2018) by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, it is estimated that the prefecture will fall about 1,409 workers short of the necessary number of care worker human resources (about 336,000 nationwide) in 2025, when the post-war baby-boom generation will be 75 years old or older. With the extension of the average life expectancy and healthy life expectancy, there are more energetic and motivated senior people, and now opportunities for such people to find work and be involved in local society are needed.

Looking at the overall situation, Tokushima Prefecture is focusing on the use of Active

Seniors in the nursing care service field, where few were involved before. The prefecture arranged work in the nursing care service field, where there is a serious shortfall in human resources, and established a system (Nursing Care Assistant System (Tokushima Version)), where active seniors are encouraged to help with peripheral care work as nursing care assistants. A model project has been in operation since fiscal year 2017.

Project Aims

- Secure care worker human resources (promote middle-aged and older people to enter the nursing care service field)
- Increase the number of middle-aged and older people with basic nursing care knowledge
- Realise Work Style Reform in nursing care sites
- Help give seniors a worthwhile life



Tokushima Prefecture Version Nursing Care

Assistant (Photo 1)

Project Outline

Nursing Care Assistant (Tokushima Prefecture Version) is a system to support a new style of work at nursing care sites, allowing people to work without having any previous experience or qualifications, even for a short time.

It is a system to improve the working environment of nursing care services by sorting out care workers' work, which used to cover a wide range of miscellaneous work, and allowing nursing care assistants to do peripheral care work including cleaning, bed-making and being a companion.

This helps encourage a diverse range of human resources including senior people to enter the field (securing human resources), streamlining nursing care workers' work, developing an environment where workers can be dedicated to the technical work, and consequently improve the quality of nursing care services.



Tokushima Prefecture Version Nursing Care Assistant (Photo 2)

Features and Innovations

The key point of this system is that care assistant work is restricted to peripheral care work, which places only a relatively low

physical burden on the workers.

This results in developing a system where those without qualifications or experience can easily take part, and also those with experience (potential nursing care workers) can come back to work even if they once left the industry.

Additionally, the project is easy to join because it is based on short working hours that pay attention to workers' physical strength and lifestyle, while providing OJT training for a certain period of time for newcomers to allow them to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills.



Tokushima Prefecture Version Nursing Care Assistant (Photo 3)

Results of the Project

In the two fiscal years 2017 and 2018, 94 active seniors between 51 and 80 years old (average age of 67) participated in the prefecture's model project (for three months) as nursing care assistants, of which 67 (71%) continued working after the model project had finished.

More than 90% of seniors who participated in the model project answered that it was "Good" or "Somewhat good" and over 90% of the peer workers answered "Very helpful" or "Somewhat helpful".

Due to favourable coverage in the mass media and the reputation of nursing care assistants after the launch of the project, some seniors

desired to become care assistants, and at least fifteen senior workers were employed by nursing care facilities independent of the prefecture's model project, and some applicants for nursing care assistants were hired as full-time nursing care workers.

Also, more than 30% of nursing care assistants are qualified with nursing care or care experience, which resulted in contributing to the cultivation of potential care worker human resources.



Tokushima Prefecture Version Nursing Care Assistant (Photo 4)

Issues, Problems and Responses

Although, over the course of the two years, no less than 347 people participated in the preliminary briefing held before recruitment interviews, and the prefecture felt that many seniors were interested in working at nursing care service sites, only 178, around half of them, proceeded to the interview stage. This is thought to be because of a mismatch in the preferred working hours between workers and employers; although the senior worker side preferred working a shorter time, such as “2-3 days a week” or “morning only”, the facility side wanted them to work, if possible, “5 days a week” and not only morning but also “late afternoon”, when workers raising children left and it gets busy.

Another factor is that not many facilities are

ready to accept nursing care assistants.

Another issue was related to “defining work”; facility workers answered “it is a great burden to sort out work when accepting nursing care assistants”, and “the scope of their work is not clear and it is difficult to determine to what level we can ask them to work”. And, there was also an issue in “cooperation and mentoring” and there was feedback from a nursing care assistant that “it is difficult to ask questions about work when the existing care workers are busy”.

To solve such issues, the prefecture provides a training system for existing workers to introduce their facilities, offers personal training and a psychological care service for nursing care assistants by preparing and distributing guidelines for facilities that accept nursing care assistants, and has professional advisors in place.

Future Developments (expected effects and project vision and issues)

It is expected that the population of the younger generation will decline in the region due to increasingly low birth rates and the increase of the aged population, as well as depopulation. The prefecture is putting effort into expanding the fields where active seniors can play important roles, including fields such as child care, and is not limited to nursing care alone.

Reference URL

Tokushima Prefecture website
<https://www.pref.tokushima.lg.jp/ippanokata/kenko/koreishafukushi/5019706/>

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