

2/22/07

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Abstract for Seminar on March 14th

Title: Legal Reforms for Home Care Workers in Japan

The rapid increase in Japanese elderly population (65 and over), which is about 20% of total population, has had a substantial impact on Japanese society, and the care and welfare of elderly has become a priority in national policy making.

The Japanese government has had to deal quickly with escalating health and medical expenditures for the elderly. As a part of the policy reform, the government has implemented a new caretaking system that provides services for elderly across all income groups. To implement the new caretaking program, which changes service provision from a local- controlled authority to a provider with direct contract with the elderly, the national government has established a platform of caretaking services, including the caretaking and welfare human resource policies.

The new caretaking program also deregulates caretaking service providers and creates a market-based system with improved and more types of caretaking services. This policy substantially impacts the caretakers and their working environment. Overall it creates jobs, but reduces the wage.

The seminar will focus on the implementation of the new caretaking program and how this new system influences caretakers' working environment in Japan, and will provide a comparison with In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) workers in California.