

## Abstract

The study of the roles of local government in Japan in elderly welfare management has four objectives: (1) to study the elderly welfare policies in Japan; (2) to study the roles of the national government and local governments in the elderly welfare policy process; (3) to study the Long-term Care Insurance system for the elderly; and (4) to find policy recommendations for Thailand to formulate appropriate elderly welfare policies.

The findings from the study reveal that:

1. Japan is one of the best well-prepared welfare countries in the world. Its welfare policies cover all groups of people. These policies compose of free welfare system for children and vulnerable groups, and compulsory welfare system. This compulsory premium insurance system requires Japanese people pay and share some cost to obtain insurance benefits.
2. Japan has joined aging society since 1990s. The previous welfare system could not cope with the demographic changes and increasing demands of the elderly. Thus, since 2000, the Government has established the Long-term Care Insurance system in response to the needs of the elderly.
3. According to the Long-term Care Insurance System, all Japanese aged 40 and older are required to participate in this scheme. They are eligible to obtain insurance benefits when they are 65 and older. Those who are between 40 and 64 years old receive insurance benefits only when their health conditions are caused by illnesses associated with aging and require Long-term Care.
4. The national government plays a crucial role in providing the institutional framework to support the implementation of the local governments. It has developed the assessment form for local officials to assess the applicants in need of Long-term Care throughout the country. The national government also provides funds to support some municipalities that face difficulties in the Long-term Care management.
5. The municipal governments are insurers and implementers who collect insurance premiums from people who are 65 and older. When the elderly apply to obtain insurance benefits, the municipal governments send municipal officials to assess physical and mental conditions of the applicants. The local governments also

contribute 12.5 percent from the general tax revenues to the national pooling funds. Additionally, the municipalities support the establishment of day service centers and inspect the private health care providers.

6. The benefits of the Long-term Care Insurance depend on the certification of insured persons. If they are not certified, they can obtain services from the prevention program which is provided by the support project. When they are certified for support levels 1 or 2, they can obtain (a) preventive benefits; and (b) the community-oriented services. When they are certified for care levels 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, they can obtain (a) care benefits; (b) facility benefits; and (c) community-oriented services.
7. Thailand is entering the aging society. Population of the elderly in 2012 was 11.36 percent and will increase to 15.28 percent in 2020. Since the birth rate decreases dramatically, to cope with this situation, Thailand should prepare the elderly welfare policies by observing the Japanese system.