

## MUNICIPALITY CASE STUDY REPORT

# We Asked Japanese Municipalities What they Are Doing to Support Adult Vaccines – and Why



In late 2025/early 2026, Global Coalition on Aging (GCOA), Health and Global Policy Institute (HGPI), and the Asia-Pacific Consortium for Healthy Aging and Adult Immunization (AP-CHAAI) teamed up to study the state of adult vaccine use in Japan. As part of that collaboration, we sent short surveys to municipalities around Japan that are offering municipal-level subsidies to cover adult vaccine costs to find out, in their own words, why they see adult vaccines as important for their aging populations. The following document summarizes our findings. At the request of the municipalities, some results have been de-identified.

## Why are Japanese municipalities offering extra financial support for adult vaccines?

All of the municipalities we surveyed talked about the value of adult vaccination. A representative from a major Japanese city wrote,

***“By covering the costs of vaccination, we protect individuals from severe illness, support the health of society as a whole, and reduce medical expenses and economic losses – there are so many reasons why we support adult vaccines.”***

Many municipalities answered similarly – adult vaccines are widely recognized as important for the way in which they can prevent severe illnesses, and in helping to stop economic losses to older adults and their communities.



### CASE STUDY – SOMA CITY, FUKUSHIMA

Soma City is a mid-sized city located on the Pacific Ocean in northeastern Fukushima Prefecture. Approximately one-third of the city's nearly 35,000 residents is over the age of 65. The city regularly sends personalized letters to older adults recommending adult immunization. It also carefully explains the benefits of adult immunization on its website and in the municipal government gazette.

***“We want to enhance the preventative power of our adult vaccine program, and increase the number of people that are receiving adult vaccines.”***



### CASE STUDY – MINATO WARD, TOKYO

Minato Ward is a large city located in the southeastern part of Tokyo along Tokyo Bay, home to a number of major Japanese company headquarters and foreign embassies. It has a resident population of approximately 270,000, with nearly 17% over the age of 65. Minato Ward offers many adult vaccines free-of-charge, and conducts both personalized outreach and general public awareness campaigns to ensure that no one misses the opportunity to get the vaccinations they want. Looking forward, the ward hopes to expand its vaccine subsidies to an even wider range of its resident population.

## What other initiatives are Japanese municipalities doing to encourage adult vaccine use?

The kinds of initiatives implemented to promote adult vaccines were truly varied, but among all the survey answers, a few more common actions emerged – beyond extra financial subsidies, many of the local governments in Japan that are championing adult vaccines are also sending individual notices to their older citizens when they become eligible for vaccines, and putting up posters and fliers about adult vaccines around their municipalities. A small, rural municipality told us,

***“We are actively promoting adult vaccines because we want to create an environment where those wishing to be vaccinated can do so with as little burden as possible.”***

## What lessons do municipalities have for national governments and civil society organizations that want to support adult immunization?

Across the municipalities surveyed, when asked about partnerships with local civil society organizations around adult immunization, not a single municipality had any partnerships to discuss. Some municipalities talked about the difficulties of being the main driver of adult vaccine uptake. A mid-size city commented,

***“National subsidies only cover 30% of the costs of adult vaccines... we want to create an environment where everyone can receive vaccinations fairly. Challenges exist with the current system. Some older adults in Japan may have to pay more out-of-pocket because they live in a fiscally-challenged municipality.”***