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Orange Medical and Social services Becomes the First Private Medical Corporation in Japan to Formally Partner with India's Institute of Palliative Medicine, a WHO Collaborating Centre

Turning what we have learned in Kerala since 2023 into practice in Japan and outreach to the next generation

FUKUI, Japan, November 26, 2026 — Medical Corporation Orange (Fukui City, Fukui Prefecture, Japan; Chairperson: Hiroyuki Beniya; "OMS") signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Institute of Palliative Medicine ("IPM") in Kozhikode, Kerala, India, on Monday, November 23, 2026, to strengthen collaboration in practice and research. A pioneer of the palliative care movement in South-East Asia,World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Building country capacity in palliative care and long term care in a developing country, IPM has facilitated the development of the "Kerala Model" of community-based palliative care across India and in other countries. By building neighborhood networks for palliative care within communities, it has helped create Compassionate Communities.

This formal partnership with IPM under an MoU is the first for a private medical corporation in Japan.

Since 2023, OMS has visited IPM to learn from its work. The signing ceremony was held during the visit to Japan of IPM's founder, Dr. Suresh Kumar, and its consultant, Mr. Saif Mohammed. Under the MoU, the two organizations will jointly develop end-of-life care training programs, promote staff exchange, and conduct joint research in communities with declining populations, including rural areas of Fukui, Ishikawa, and Nagano Prefectures and remote islands with the aim of passing on this knowledge to the next generation.



Signing ceremony on November 23. From left: Keita Uemura, Director, Orange Home Care Clinic; Satoko N. Fujioka, Co-Representative, Hotch no Lodge; Hiroyuki Beniya, Chairperson, OMS; Dr. Suresh Kumar, Founder, IPM; and Mr. Saif Mohammed, Director, IPM.

Background

Since March 2023, Orange has made four visits to IPM, and our staff have learned on site a total of eleven times.

- March 2023: Five members, including Beniya, Kikuchi, Kinoshita, and Fujioka, made the first visit.
- October 2023: Sato and Fujioka visited to take the volunteer training that is regarded as the core of the Kerala Model.
- March 2025: Fujioka visited as a guide and interpreter for a group of organizations, including social welfare corporations.
- March 2026: Beniya, Kubo, and Katsuki took the volunteer training.

An experience that changed how we understand "palliative care"

In Japan, "palliative care" is widely seen as care for the final stage of cancer. Internationally, however, the term refers to care that helps people live with illnesses that cannot be cured. Our experience at IPM completely changed how we understood the term "palliative care."

At IPM, an exceptionally wide range of people provide this "palliative care." At its center are members of the public who have completed volunteer training that IPM developed with WHO, and the number of trainees, including university students, exceeds tens of thousands. Under the motto "Because I care," people young and old share loss and support one another, even through hardship, with brightness and creativity. On site, we saw the hope that medical and non-medical people can truly work together, and the systems and practices that make it possible.

Taking our work as healthcare practitioners further

Almost all of the home care patients we serve, and the children with medical care needs who attend Orange Kids' Care Lab*, are people who need "palliative care." To bring richness and good food to their daily lives, we have welcomed into our group a café and craftspeople who make postural support devices and chairs. We have also made community events such as festivals, and the involvement and training of volunteers, one of the central parts of our work. At the same time, we are still learning how to build communities together with many different people, and we have needed to work with an institution that has deep knowledge in this area.

*Orange Kids' Care Lab: Founded in 2012, it works to connect children with medical care needs and their families with society.
https://carelab.jp/

From learning to practice and research in communities with declining populations, including rural areas and remote islands

Working with other organizations and local governments, we have sought to change how healthcare professionals and residents think about and engage with the end of life in rural communities with declining populations. In these communities, supporting residents throughout their lives requires a system for growing and passing on knowledge of healthcare, nursing care, and social welfare within the community.

In November 2026, OMS signed a comprehensive partnership agreement with Ama Town (Shimane Prefecture) and Kaze to Tsuchi to Inc. to build a sustainable community healthcare system. Building on this agreement, we aim to expand our practice to remote island communities, where populations are declining even faster.

(Reference) Press release on the agreement with Ama Town and Kaze to Tsuchi to Inc.
https://prtimes.jp/main/html/rd/p/000000021.000152822.html

To apply what we have learned on site since 2023 to our practice and to share it with the next generation, we decided to formalize our partnership with IPM, which has an international track record in community-based palliative care, through this MoU.



March 2023: Lecture by Dr. Suresh Kumar (right) and discussion with the OMS delegation



October 2023: Training led by Mr. Saif



March 2026: Mr. Saif explaining the work of IPM

Main Areas of Collaboration

Under the MoU, the two organizations will work to improve the quality of, and access to, community-based palliative care in rural areas of Fukui, Ishikawa, and Nagano Prefectures and on remote islands through technical cooperation and capacity building.

- Technical advice: IPM will advise OMS on global and regional initiatives to strengthen palliative care.
- Technical resources and expertise: IPM will provide technical resources and expertise for projects that improve the capacity and quality of palliative care.
- Capacity building: IPM will support capacity building through a train-the-trainers approach, including specialized training programs and short visits by local professionals.
- Local implementation: As the implementation partner, OMS will put the technical resources provided by IPM into practice and sustain them.
- Joint projects: The two organizations will jointly develop cooperative projects to improve palliative care services.

Going forward, the two organizations will also consider setting joint research themes and staff visits.

Outlook

Through this partnership, OMS will learn from the training programs IPM has implemented in various regions and aims to develop and implement new training programs tailored to the context and needs of rural and island communities. Through staff exchanges and an annual sharing of practice, the two organizations will build a relationship of mutual learning, share their practice through joint research and public statements, and pass it on to the next generation.

In the long term, OMS aims to create a comprehensive educational system that enables local residents to gain specialized knowledge in healthcare, nursing care, and social welfare, and to build sustainable, inclusive communities in rural and island areas where the population is declining.

Comments

Dr. Suresh Kumar, Founder and director of World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre,Institute of Palliative Medicine

We look forward to the long term association with Orange Medical and Social Service. Together, we can contribute to making the world a better place to live.

Mr. Saif Mohammed, Consultant of World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre,Institute of Palliative Medicine

This collaboration brings together complementary experiences in community-oriented palliative care and integrated medical and social services, creating valuable opportunities for mutual learning. Having facilitated the Orange Medical and Social Care team's visits to IPM, it is particularly meaningful for me to now see their work in action in Japan. I hope this partnership will help us develop context-sensitive, collective solutions that make care more compassionate and timely for people facing serious health and social challenges.

Hiroyuki Beniya, Chairperson, Orange Medical and Social services

India's growing population strains its healthcare and social welfare systems, while Japan's declining population makes sustaining these systems challenging. Despite these opposite issues, both countries are shifting toward community-based care. I see significant potential in this shared approach.

During my visit to IPM, I was inspired by students and local residents who actively and enthusiastically chose to provide care. Their strong connection to their own health extends naturally to those around them. This cycle of giving and receiving care fosters security for individuals, families, and the community.

Societal prosperity relies on more than advanced or specialized healthcare. We should aim for a society where we support one another in living authentically, even with illness or disability. Through this partnership, I hope to work with IPM to explore the ideal balance of medical care and community support, created collaboratively by professionals and community members as we learn together.

Satoko N. Fujioka, Co-Representative, Hotch no Lodge, Orange Medical and Social services

In a society facing population decline, the daily lives shaped by healthcare professionals and local residents represent a vision I, as someone outside the medical field, sincerely hope to see realized. To bring this vision to life in a lively and creative way, I will continue to collaborate with IPM to make it a reality.

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About the Institute of Palliative Medicine (IPM)

In 1993, the Pain and Palliative Care Society was founded as a rights-based civil society organization for people living with incurable illnesses, and it has promoted community-based palliative care since then. In 2004, IPM was established as the Society's training, research, and outreach arm to systematize this work and implement it in different regions.

A pioneer of the palliative care movement in South-East Asia World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Building country capacity in palliative care and long term care in a developing country,IPM facilitates the development of the "Kerala Model" of community-based palliative care across India and in other countries. By building neighborhood networks for palliative care within communities, it works toward Compassionate Communities.

In addition to palliative care outpatient, inpatient (30 beds), home care, and rehabilitation services, IPM provides vocational training, financial support, and food support. Its education and training division runs courses for healthcare professionals alongside training for volunteers, including students, and the number of trainees from the public exceeds tens of thousands.

Website: https://instituteofpalliativemedicine.org/

Dr. Suresh Kumar

The founder and director of World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre,Institute of Palliative Medicine, After qualifying as a physician in India, Dr. Kumar trained and practiced as an anesthesiologist in the United Kingdom before returning to India. He founded IPM in Kerala and now serves as its technical advisor. For more than 30 years, he has been active in palliative care in India and internationally. As a central member of the team that built Kerala's community-based palliative care system, he has helped launch community-based palliative care projects around the world. He has held teaching positions at universities in the United Kingdom, Australia, and Thailand, and his work is widely cited in papers and books in many countries. In 2026, he was selected as a recipient of the WHO South-East Asia Regional Award for Public Health Champions.

Mr. Saif Mohammed

The consultant of World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre,Institute of Palliative MedicineDirector of IPM. Mr. Saif studied pharmacy at university and began volunteering at IPM as a student. He started his career at IPM as it was expanding its activities across Kerala. Working closely with Dr. Suresh Kumar, he gained extensive experience in program development and management, community engagement, and coordination. He spent two years on secondment to a UNICEF project, working on support programs for children affected by crime. He also serves on the board of an overseas organization, promoting death literacy. He has given many talks and runs many programs in India and abroad.

About Orange Medical and Social services

Under the theme "Be happy! in people's daily lives," Orange has operated since 2011 in three prefectures in Japan, starting from home medical care and extending to food, clothing, and housing. It runs four home care clinics, and as the Orange Group it also operates day facilities for children with medical care needs (Fukui and Nagano), a chair-craft workshop (Ishikawa), personal training teams (Fukui and Nagano), community health rooms (two locations in Fukui), cafés (two locations in Fukui), and a special nursing home for older people (Fukui).

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Representative: Hiroyuki Beniya / Established: February 2011