

**INITIATIVES TAKEN BY  
THE TOKYO METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT  
FOR COVID-19 RESPONSE**

Revised June 2, 2023

Tokyo Metropolitan Government

# Introduction

- Along with implementing effective measures by working in collaboration with the national government, municipalities, and neighboring prefectures, and also leveraging the knowledge of experts in our over three-year long battle against COVID-19, it was thanks to the immense efforts of our residents, businesses, and medical professionals that Tokyo was able to unite in overcoming the repeated waves of infection. We would like to again extend our deepest gratitude to everyone.
- Humanity, which has faced many infectious diseases over its history, could be threatened at any time by the emergence of an unknown virus. In preparation for this, Tokyo will become a resilient and sustainable city that does not falter, even when confronted by new infectious diseases. At the very foundation of this sustainable recovery is none other than the knowledge and experiences we gained while seeking solutions, sometimes in the dark.
- This report looks back on our battle with COVID-19, summarizing the features of each of the 1st through 8th waves and Tokyo's response and achievements.
- Tokyo will continue to strengthen measures in preparation for the emergence of infectious diseases, and as a resilient city, will secure the safety and peace of mind of our residents.

## Summary of Initiatives

- With the cooperation of the healthcare professionals, residents, and businesses of Tokyo, in collaboration with the national government, the municipalities of Tokyo, and neighboring local governments, we were able to overcome the multiple waves of infection during our over three-year long battle against the novel coronavirus.

### (The first confirmed infection in Tokyo and the threat of an unknown virus)

- On January 24, 2020, **the first case of infection in Tokyo** was confirmed, and on January 30, **the Tokyo Metropolitan Government established the Tokyo Novel Coronavirus Response Headquarters**. There were also reports of many asymptomatic cases, and **clusters were occurring** in restaurants, medical institutions, and other establishments. The number of positive cases with unknown transmission routes and the number of close contacts increased rapidly, **straining the health care delivery system and the operations of public health centers**. **Masks and other supplies were also in short supply**.
- Amid a lack of knowledge about COVID-19 and growing concern among Tokyo residents, **the TMG established the Novel Coronavirus Hotline and the COVID-19 Information Website** to provide correct knowledge and information to Tokyo residents. Patients suspected of being infected were referred to dedicated **COVID-19 outpatient institutions** to receive proper treatment.
- **The TMG requested Tokyo residents to thoroughly refrain from going out** and requested a wide range of industries and facilities to **suspend operations**. **State of emergency measures and temporary closures of elementary, junior high, and high schools, etc.**, were also implemented.

### (Launch of the Monitoring Meeting and Tokyo iCDC)

- After the request to stay at home was lifted, **infections among young people** surged (second wave). New positive cases exceeding that of the first wave put **a further strain on the operation of public health centers**.
- In July 2020, **the TMG established the Monitoring Council** for expert analyses of the infection situation and health care delivery system, and took necessary measures based on these analyses. In addition, **TMG established the Tokyo iCDC in October 2020 as a permanent command post** to implement effective infection control measures in an integrated manner, and through the establishment of an Expert Board and other functions, investigated, analyzed, and collected and disseminated information from an expert perspective.

# Summary of Initiatives

## (Spread of infections due to an increase in year-end parties and other such gatherings)

- In the third wave (November 2020 to March 2021), both new positive cases and severe cases increased significantly compared to the first and second waves. Due to the return of people to their hometowns and the holding of events during the year-end and New Year holiday period, opportunities to dine together increased, leading to the spread of the virus.
- While implementing **the second state-of-emergency measures**, **a Vaccination Team** was established to promote the building of a vaccination system by the TMG, municipalities, medical associations, etc., and its smooth implementation.

## (Fighting a new enemy, the Alpha variant)

- In the fourth wave (April to June 2021), the emergence of **the Alpha variant**, which was more infectious than the original coronavirus, led to the spread of infection mainly among the younger generations. The over one-year battle against COVID was having ongoing impacts on business, operations, and sales, with a prolonged, severe environment for businesses.
- **Vaccinations for senior citizens began**, and the TMG opened **mass vaccination centers** using facilities including Olympic and Paralympic Games-related sites, and also implemented **the third state-of-emergency measures**.

## (Fight against the Delta variant with its high risk of severe illness)

- In the fifth wave (July-October 2021), due to rapid replacement by **the Delta strain**, which was very infectious and carried the high risk of patients developing serious symptoms, emergency medical services also came under strain. With progress made in the vaccination of the elderly, the age groups of positive patients and hospitalized patients spread from seniors to middle-aged and younger age groups.
- In cooperation with various entities (universities, economic organizations, etc.), the TMG established **additional mass vaccination centers** to **accelerate vaccinations** and significantly reduce the number of newly infected patients. Along with this, initiatives were taken to **bolster the health care system**, such as opening **oxygen and medical care delivery stations** as a supplementary system to hospitalized treatment, to ensure that patients can receive care.
- During the Olympic and Paralympic Games held amid **the fourth state-of-emergency measures**, Tokyo called for people to refrain from going outdoors, implementing a PR campaign over various media **“to make this our final STAY HOME summer.”**

## Summary of Initiatives

### (Response to the highly contagious Omicron variant)

- In the sixth wave (January to May 2022), there was a surge in new positive cases due to the Omicron variant, the most infectious variant to date, and due to **an increase in transmissions within the household**, the virus spread to senior citizens who are at high risk and children.
- Leveraging the experience and knowledge gained to date, along with **taking preemptive actions to enhance the health care delivery system** such as **establishing Uchisapo Tokyo** to support the increasing number of COVID patients recovering at home and **bolstering the system to treat elderly patients at high risk**, **third vaccinations** were also promoted.
- Based on the analyses and findings by the Monitoring Council and Tokyo iCDC in initiatives taken up to the 6th wave, **the health care delivery system overall was enhanced and bolstered as the “Tokyo Model.”** This included improving consulting and testing systems, quickly securing hospital beds, establishing treatment facilities for the elderly, and establishing a follow-up system. In addition, Tokyo worked for the smooth implementation of vaccinations and also promoted more efficient operations by strengthening and promoting the digitalization of public health centers.

### (Response to the surge in infections due to the Omicron subvariant, BA.5, and living with COVID)

- As replacement of the dominant variant by the Omicron BA.5 subvariant progressed, in September 2022, the national government announced its policy of shifting to **a “new stage of living with COVID,”** entering a new phase in which, as a general rule, no behavior restrictions are implemented, **with only the number of elderly patients and other high risk patients being reported**, and priority given to measures for such patients.
- Leveraging the framework of the "Tokyo Model," along with enhancing the system of **protecting the lives and well-being of every Tokyo resident**, initiatives were taken to **achieve a balance between socioeconomic activities and preventing the spread of the virus without imposing new behavior restrictions**. While the seventh wave was the highest ever in the number of new cases, **the number of infected patients and the mortality rate remained low** compared to other countries.

# Summary of Initiatives

## (Response to a twindemic with influenza)

- In the eighth wave, with no restrictions on behavior at the year-end and New Year holiday season, travel was at its highest level since the start of the pandemic.
- **In preparation for a COVID and seasonal flu twindemic, public health and medical care delivery systems were bolstered** based on estimates of the highest-ever number of patients.
- Tokyo called for **“proactive“ measures in the form of vaccinations, “protective” action by taking basic steps to prevent the spread of infection, and being “prepared” by stockpiling,** to lead an "active winter" that strikes a balance between infection prevention measures and socioeconomic activities.

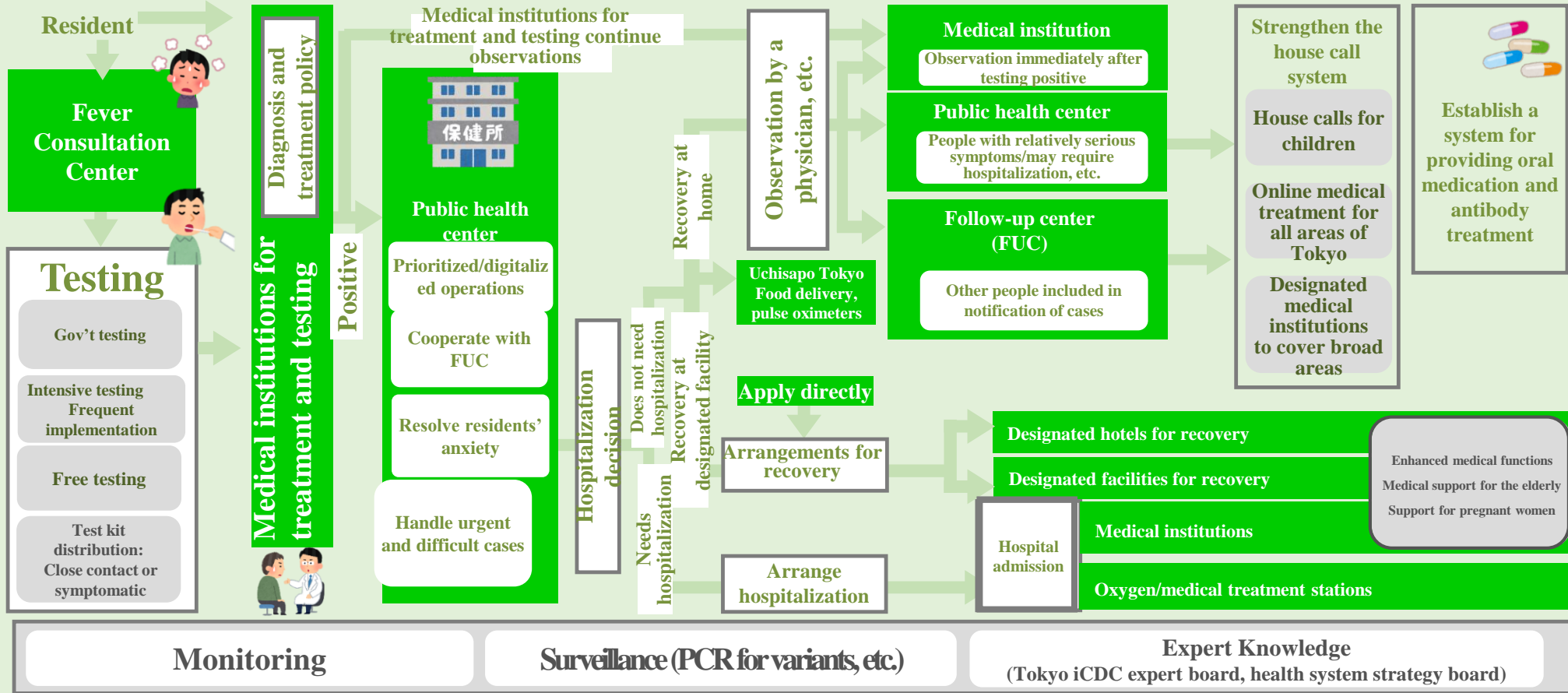
## (Realization of "Sustainable Recovery")

- The national government decided to downgrade COVID-19 as a Class 5 infectious disease as of May 8, 2023, and introduce a phased transition of the health care system.
- To keep Tokyo residents from becoming concerned and to avoid confusion at medical institutions and other related facilities following the Class 5 downgrade, **necessary support systems will be continued for the time being to protect the elderly and other high-risk groups while gradually shifting to a system that allows patients to receive medical care at a wide range of medical institutions.**
- The outbreak and spread of new infectious diseases other than COVID could also occur in the future. To respond to such a situation, **a liaison council for infectious disease response** was newly established to always be prepared for any infectious disease, including unknown contagious diseases, and to, among others, disseminate necessary information to the citizens of Tokyo and expand the health care delivery system based on expert opinions and other considerations.
- **COVID-19 had significant impacts not only in the areas of “medical and healthcare” but also on society overall,** such as the “economy,” “lifestyles,” and even “children’s lives.” An example is the sluggish economic growth rate due to the decline in inbound visitors.
- Advancements in DX have also given rise to **changes in society that should be continued and developed,** such as online medical consultations, one-to-one computing in schools, the implementation of real and online events, and the diversification of work styles, including remote work..
- Leveraging the knowledge and experience accumulated to date, Tokyo will not only work to return to pre-COVID days, but will also protect the health and safety of Tokyo citizens from the threat of various infectious diseases, and **ensure a “sustainable recovery” for sustainable development while overcoming challenges, to realize a more vibrant Tokyo.**
- In addition, roundtable discussions were held between the Tokyo iCDC experts and experts in various fields to analyze the many impacts COVID had on society from a diversity of perspectives. This was compiled in a booklet.

# Summary of Initiatives

## Overview of the Health and Medical Care System\*

Patients included in cases reported

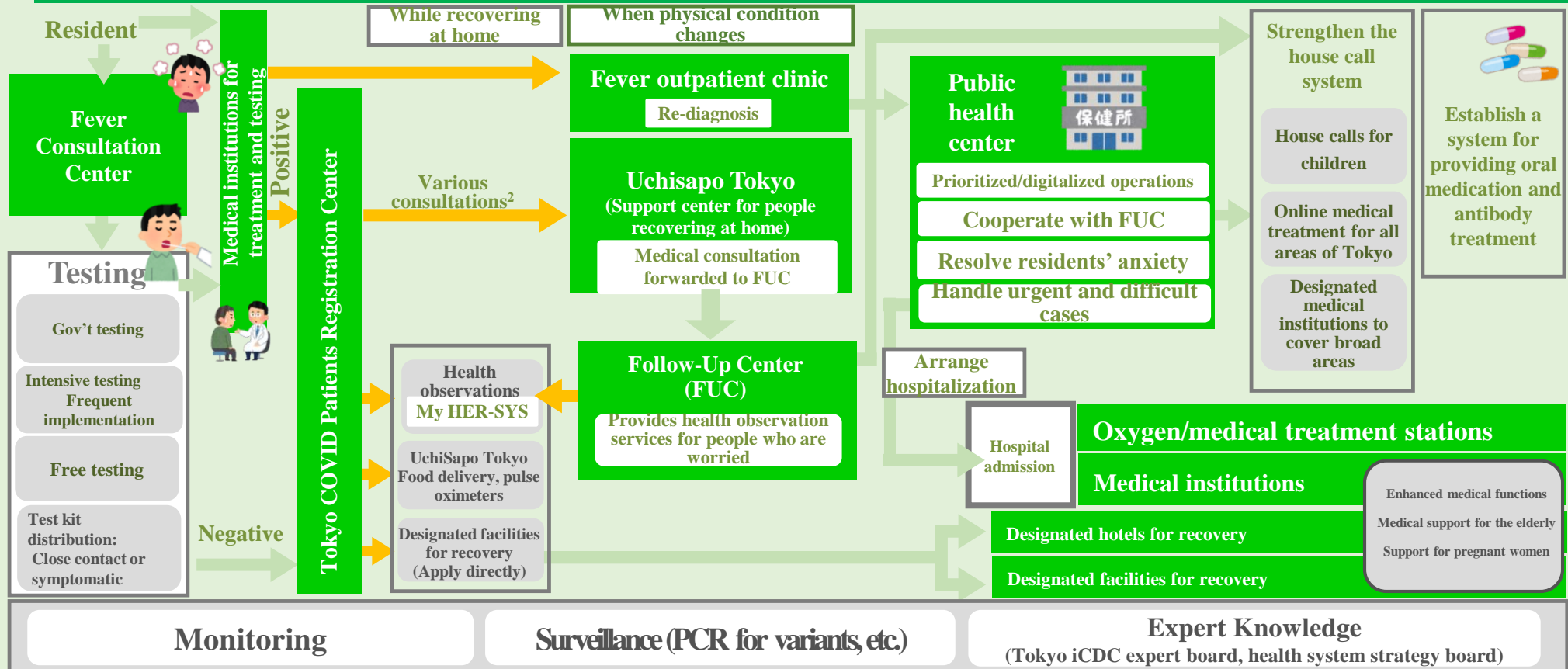


\* Before reclassification of COVID-19 as a "Class 5" infectious disease.

# Summary of Initiatives

## Overview of the Health and Medical Care System<sup>1</sup>

Patients not included in cases reported

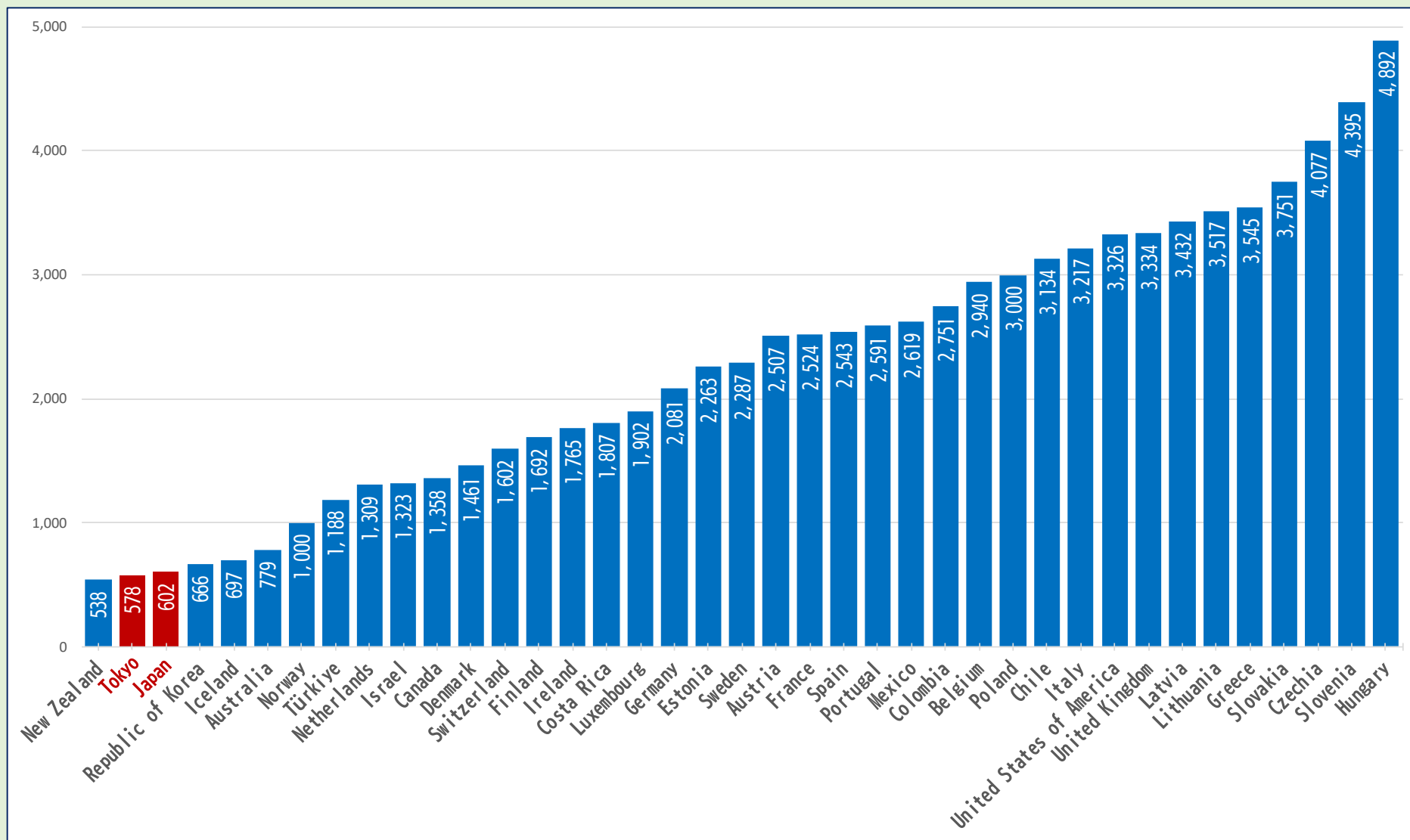


1. Before reclassification of COVID-19 as a Class 5 infectious disease.
2. People not registered at the center for positive cases were able to use services for general consultation, and if their condition suddenly changed, they were also able to receive medical consultation and be re-diagnosed at a fever outpatient clinic.



## Summary of Initiatives

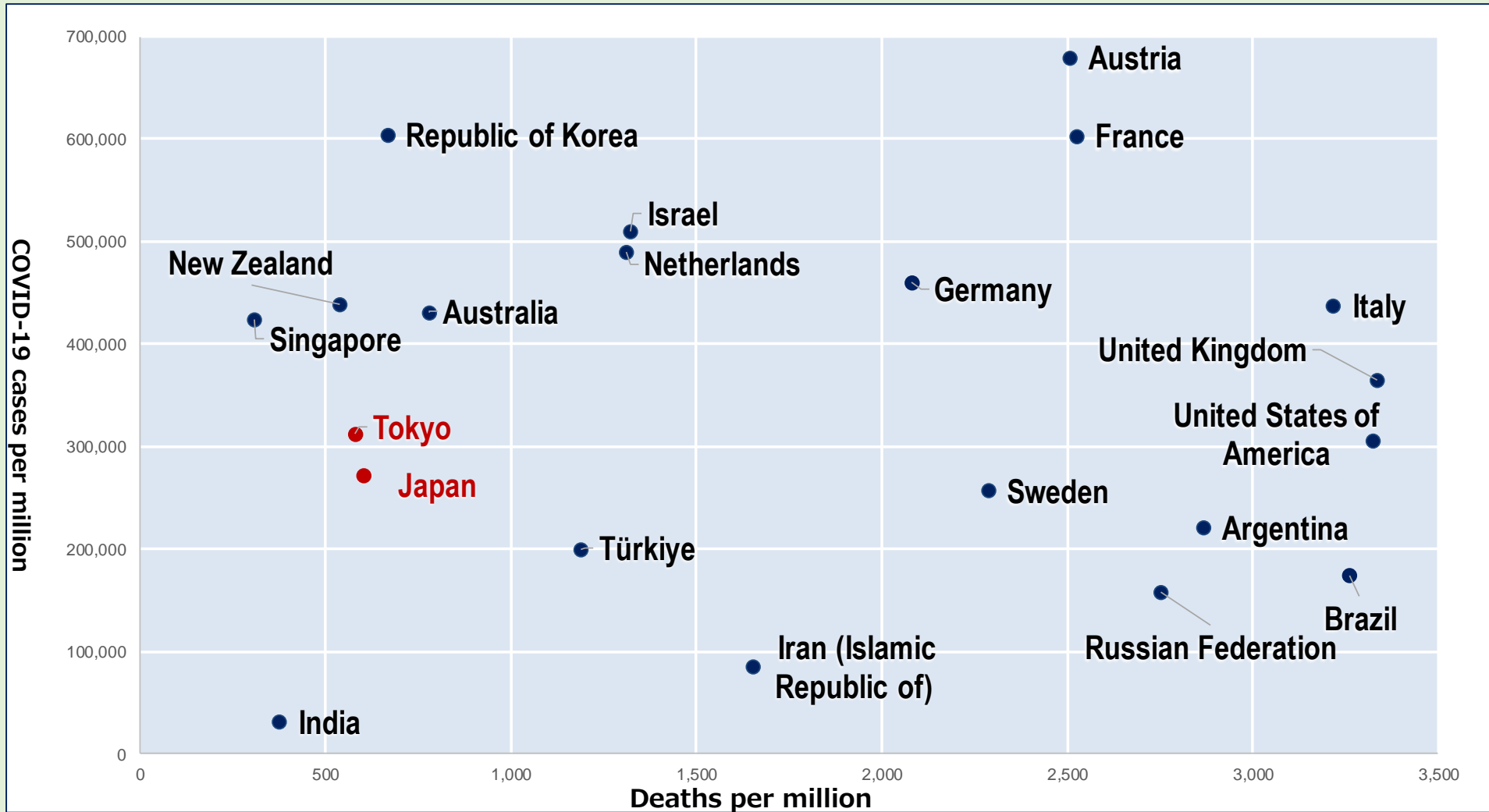
### Cumulative COVID-19 deaths per million (Comparison with OECD countries) as of May 8, 2023



Prepared from <https://ourworldindata.org/> by the TMG on May 26, 2023

# Summary of Initiatives

## Infection situation by country (cumulative and estimated totals as of May 8)



Both cases and deaths per million population have been kept down in Tokyo and Japan compared to the rest of the world.

Prepared from <https://ourworldindata.org/> by the TMG on May 26, 2023

# Basic Stance of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government for COVID-19 Response

The fight against COVID-19, what could be called an unprecedented once-in-a-century crisis, has been continuing for more than three years. During this long struggle, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) has taken measures based on the following stance.

- In partnership with the national government, municipalities, public health centers, and medical institutions, use Tokyo's full resources to curb the spread of infection in order to **protect the invaluable lives and health of each and every resident of the city**.
- Improve and strengthen safety nets by providing various forms of assistance **to support city residents and businesses in their daily lives and business operations**, which have been severely impacted by the pandemic.
- **In order to curb the spread of infection**, take protective measures, such as restraining travel and thoroughly taking basic steps to prevent infection, proactive measures through tools such as vaccinations and therapeutic drugs, and preparedness measures such as stockpiling necessary items including medical supplies and food, and providing information on how to see a doctor. Along with this, take measures **to achieve a balance with socioeconomic activities**.

Should new waves of infection occur due to factors such as the emergence of variants, Tokyo will overcome the situation by leveraging our knowledge and experience to date and fully marshalling our resources to implement agile measures in accordance with the situation.