

Haruka Sakamoto

Language English



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Japan

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

I am deeply motivated to join the NCDA Board of Directors because I believe in the transformative power of multisectoral collaboration to tackle non-communicable diseases (NCDs) globally. Over the course of my career as a family physician in Japan, a policymaker at the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and a global working experience at the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office, I have witnessed firsthand how the convergence of clinical practice, policy development, and community engagement can drive remarkable improvements in public health. Japan's remarkable achievement in health and longevity is not solely the product of high-income status but also the result of long-standing, community-driven NCD prevention strategies established even before our economic boom. This experience has taught me that effective NCD control requires not just a top-down approach, but an organic collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including local communities.

I want to contribute to the NCDA Board because I am passionate about sharing Japan's valuable experiences and learning from the global community. The challenges of aging populations, fiscal constraints in healthcare, and health inequities are shared concerns worldwide. Being part of the Board would enable me to work alongside international experts to exchange insights, refine strategies, and jointly develop innovative solutions that can adapt to varied contexts. I am excited by the opportunity to help steer global efforts that not only prevent NCDs but also foster resilient health systems through inclusive, cross-sectoral partnerships.

What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors?

My diverse background in clinical medicine, health policy, and international consultancy uniquely positions me as a strong candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors. I began my career as a family physician in Japan, where I developed a deep understanding of patient-centered care and community health. Later, working at the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, I contributed to shaping national medical policies and strategies—many of which laid the groundwork for Japan's successful NCD prevention initiatives that predate our high-income era. My five-year tenure as a consultant for the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office further broadened my perspective by allowing me to collaborate on strengthening primary health care and NCD strategies across diverse settings in the Asia-Pacific region.

Academically, I have pursued advanced degrees in health policy at Harvard University (Master) and the University of Tokyo (PhD), equipping me with rigorous analytical and research skills. This blend of clinical practice, governmental policy experience, international engagement, and academic grounding enables me to bridge the gap between evidence-based strategies and practical implementation. I understand the complexities of both top-down governmental approaches and bottom-up community initiatives, a dual perspective that is crucial for effective global NCD management. I am committed to fostering a culture of mutual learning and collaboration among stakeholders, making me a dedicated and effective contributor to the NCDA Board.

Biography

Haruka Sakamoto, MD MPH, PhD is a primary care physician and a senior manager at Health and Global Policy Institute. She got her M.D from Sapporo Medical University and worked as a physician at St Luke's International Hospital in Tokyo for several years. She then got a scholarship from the World Bank and got her MPH at the Harvard School of Public Health and got PhD in public health from the University of Tokyo in 2021. In the past, she worked at the international cooperation department, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan, where she was deeply involved in health policy activities in Japan. Her current research focuses on prevention and control of NCDs, health system strengthening, health care financing, and politics in global health. She's currently working as the 26th Associate Member of Japan Science Council, and visiting associate professor at the Graduate School of Public Health, St Luke's International University.

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