

## Mayor's Message (December 7<sup>th</sup> 2020)

Hello everyone. I'm FUSHIMI Takashi, Mayor of Hirakata City.

Now, many hospitals accepting COVID-19 patients are facing hard situations due to the fact that the number of serious cases is increasing day by day. Consequently, Osaka prefectural government raised the Osaka's original COVID-19 warning level – “Osaka Model” – from “Yellow” to “Red” stage.

If the serious cases continue to increase in this pace, the number of COVID-19 patients may exceed that of hospital beds in the near future and may cause the so-called medical collapse in which many serious patients cannot receive proper medical cares. In Hirakata, new COVID-19 patients are increasing since November. The shortage of beds and medical staff severely hits hospitals in Hirakata.

In addition, clusters happened in some care homes. Therefore, not only hospitals but also health and welfare facilities need to strengthen their measures and systems to fight against COVID-19.

We are standing on the edge of medical collapse. It was a very tough decision for me. But, in order to protect citizens' lives and health, I decided to close Hirakata's life-long learning centres and sports centres from December 7<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>. I also decided to cancel or postpone all events (co-)hosted by Hirakata.

In the year-end and new-year season, you may have a lot of opportunities to meet your friends and colleagues due to Christmas and Hatsumode (visiting shrines and temples in the new year). Now, we are in a crucial phase to prevent medical collapse. Again, I would like to ask you to stay home until this infectious spike calms down and to pay attention to the prevention of the spread of coronavirus.

I also would like to ask you to think to yourself, “I will do my best to not get infected with COVID-19 and to not spread it to anyone else”. Thank you for your daily cooperation.

FUSHIMI Takashi  
Mayor of Hirakata City  
December 7<sup>th</sup> 2020