

Mayor's Message on Re-Extension of State of Emergency over COVID-19
(September 13th to 30th)

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

The central government has decided to extend the period of state of emergency over the novel corona virus pandemic until September 30th in 19 prefectures including Osaka. For the governmental decision, Osaka prefectural government is continuing to ask restaurants and bars to stop serving alcohols and to close earlier than usual while large-scale events are requested to be held under strict conditions. In Hirakata, also, the task force meeting against COVID-19 on September 10th has decided to change the final day of anti-corona measures such as closing city facilities at 8p.m. and limiting the number of event participants from 12th to 30th.

The expansion of new corona cases in the so-called "fifth spike" is slightly decreasing. In Hirakata, there were three days when more than 100 new corona patients were confirmed since August 29th. However, the number of Hirakata's new corona cases is also decreasing in September. Now, it hovers around 50 cases. On the other hand, the occupancy rate of hospital beds for mild to moderate patients remains to be high by about 70%. In Hirakata City Hospital, the hospital beds for corona patients in Osaka are nearly full. The Hirakata's medical system is in middle of an unpredictable situation.

Furthermore, the number of corona patients who need medical treatments is still high. It exceeds the peak of the fourth spike in the Hirakata Health Centre's area. We hurried to strengthen centre's functions since the staff needed more time to contact the patients with the increase of new corona cases. In concrete terms, we built a support system to mobilise city staff in the city hall and asked for help to Kansai Medical University and Setsunan University. Consequently, their students who study nursing are helping our hearing investigations of the corona patients. I fully understand that the corona patients and their family members are worrying about when the health centre makes contact. We are making full efforts to confirm patients' health conditions as soon as possible. I sincerely call for your further cooperation to our investigations.

In Hirakata, 90% of those aged 65 or more have already got anti-corona vaccines. According to the percentage of new corona cases by age, people aged 20s or younger occupy about 50 percent whilst the elderly percentage is quite low. In my view, this consequence shows that

the vaccines are, to some extent, effective. Now, those aged 12 or more can get vaccines. At this moment, more than 40 % of Hirakata's citizens are inoculated twice. We will do our utmost to provide enough vaccines to all citizens who desire vaccinations by the end of November. I know that the risk of infection with COVID-19 will not become zero by inoculation. However, the vaccine is highly effective to decrease the danger of developing symptoms. In the fifth spike, the percentage of severe patients is clearly dropping among inoculated people.

Of course, even after getting vaccinated, it is very important for everyone to continue daily precautions such as wearing a face mask, disinfecting your hands and fingers, and keeping physical distances with others. I would like to ask for your continuous cooperation in our anti-corona measures. Let's prevent spreading COVID-19 together.

September 13th 2021

FUSHIMI Takashi
Mayor of Hirakata City