



# GR JAPAN INDUSTRY INSIGHT

## CLOSE UP: HEALTHCARE

### Progress and Challenges in the Digitalization of Vaccine Processes

#### Key Takeaways

- GR Japan's survey on municipalities that participated in the government's FY2023 pilot project to digitalize vaccine processes has revealed that progress is slower than expected, and municipalities are experiencing various issues.
- Challenges noted by participating municipalities include a lack of personnel, low enrollment in the My Number card scheme, and poor linkages to the Public Medical Hub (PMH).
- In FY2024, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) is expected to play a more significant role in the digitalization of vaccines.

The survey identifies administrative hurdles and areas for improvement in digitalizing vaccine processes at the local level.



Medical Digital Transformation (DX), which involves integrating digital technologies across all stages of healthcare to optimize data management, enhance service efficiency, and improve care quality, has become an increasingly important priority for the Japanese government. According to the government's Medical DX Promotion Roadmap, which was determined in 2023, a certain number of municipalities were to engage in a pilot project to implement the digitalization of vaccination processes for routine vaccines against category A diseases in FY2023, with this to be expanded to include other municipalities in FY2024. This report provides an overview of the progress of municipalities that participated in the government's FY2023 pilot project.

In April 2024, GR Japan surveyed nine participating municipalities to assess their progress in digitalizing vaccine processes and received responses from six. The number of medical institutions participating in the pilot project varied significantly depending on the municipality, ranging from as many as 16 to as low as one.

According to our survey, most municipalities participated in the pilot project to enhance the convenience and efficiency of their administrative and medical service delivery, such as by reducing processing costs for paper applications and promoting the usage of My Number cards. Moreover, four municipalities requested the government to consider digitalizing routine vaccines against category B diseases and optional vaccines to enhance convenience for residents and increase vaccination rates,

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although the scope of the pilot project at the time was limited to digitalizing routine vaccines against category A diseases.

However, the majority of participating municipalities are currently behind schedule, primarily due to administrative issues, such as a lack of personnel and insufficient enrollment in the My Number card scheme. Most municipalities have yet to complete the process of linking with the PMH.

Going forward, GR Japan expects to see some key developments. While the pilot project was carried out by the Digital Agency in FY2023, MHLW is expected to play a more significant role in the direction of relevant policies in FY2024. In May 2024, at the time of our research, the two were in discussions regarding whether to fund the initiative exclusively by the Digital Agency or to also use the MHLW budget. Additionally, our research revealed that MHLW is keen to digitalize vaccinations for category B diseases and optional vaccines by around the fall of 2024.

Overall, our research into the status of Japan's digitalization of vaccine processes indicates that progress is being made, albeit slowly, but a number of administrative issues must be addressed at the local level. To ensure a successful outcome, it is crucial that the government considers the various concerns expressed by the municipalities surveyed in this report.

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