

Column: Services to watch over the elderly strengthened by a local government and private companies – Improvement and extension of a watch-over network -

The percentage of the elderly in Nerima City, Tokyo, is almost the same as the average of the entire Tokyo Prefecture. However, the age composition of the population of Nerima is characterized by the large percentage of the people in their fifties. As this age composition suggests the aging of a large number of people who moved into the city in the latter half of the 1980's, there is a concern over rapid progress of the aging of the population in near future.

The Government of Nerima City concluded an agreement on the watch-over network for the elderly with 17 organizations including a postal service provider and a domestic gas supplier in September 2014 and improved, extended and strengthened the watch-over service with the assistance of private organizations including NPOs and volunteer organizations that provide community-based services.

The Government of Nerima City intends to provide multi-layered watch-over services in the entire city to prevent people dying alone in the city by developing a loose watch-over network of the organizations which have agreed to take part in the network in addition to the existing mutual support systems in communities.

In practice, employees of the postal service and Tokyo Gas group companies are to report abnormalities such as a large accumulation of uncollected mail in a mail box that they have found when they visit households to deliver mail and read the gas meter to the consultation center for the elderly after analyzing the conditions of the abnormalities thoroughly.

The "Hikarigaoka Community Council" consisting of the residents associations and management associations of housing complexes have established and provided a watch-over service. In this service a recipient of the service affixes a magnetic sticker (on which a message, "I am fine," is written) provided by the council on the outside of the door of her/his house after s/he gets up every morning and a volunteer confirms the sticker on the door and places it in the mail box of the house.