

# Executive Summary

The advancement of women is a key pillar of the economic growth strategy of the government of Japan (GOJ). Study after study has shown that increasing female participation in the workforce will significantly increase Japan's economic growth potential. The American Chamber of Commerce (ACCJ) and the European Business Council in Japan (EBC) applaud the GOJ for seeking to tap this potential.

To date, the GOJ's main policy focus as it relates to women's issues has been on reforms to support working mothers and to increase the number of women in managerial positions. Complementary to these structural and social reforms is the critical yet overlooked need to improve the prevention and treatment of female-specific health risks so as to ensure women stay healthy throughout their working lives. While men also face specific health challenges, this primer will focus specifically on the health challenges that women face when entering and remaining in the workforce.

There are many opportunities to improve the current environment in support of women's health. Meeting these healthcare challenges will not only be beneficial to Japanese women, but will also strengthen the economy and society as a whole.

As the drafting of this primer was being completed, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced a new set of economic policies dubbed "the new three arrows" on Thursday, September 24th, 2015. These new policies combine efforts to shape a stronger economy, provide assistance for childbearing and steps to enhance social security measures. A key goal of these new policies is to stabilize the Japanese population at 100 million in 50 years. The current population is 126 million and it is declining at an accelerating rate. The key to stabilizing the population will be the implementation of policies to boost the birthrate from 1.4 to 1.8. Clearly, the role of women in the economy and women's health issues are central to the realization of this goal and the success of these new policies.

Sincerely,

William Bishop  
Chair  
ACCJ Healthcare  
Committee

Danny Risberg  
Chair  
EBC Medical  
Equipment Committee