



## **Fukushima Medical University's response to the March 11 earthquake and subsequent disasters.**

18 March 2011, Fukushima City, Japan

One week after an unprecedented earthquake and tsunami devastated coastal areas of Japan, and precipitated a nuclear power plant crisis, Fukushima Medical University (FMU) and its affiliated hospital continue to serve patients arriving from inside and outside Fukushima Prefecture.

FMU is giving priority to severely injured patients and those directly affected by the earthquake and its aftermath. These patients arrive in busses, ambulances, and medical evacuation helicopters. Non-urgent patients, including those with prior outpatient appointments, are being asked to seek care from other facilities as needed.

We continue to feel aftershocks from the magnitude 9.0 earthquake. Inland from tsunami-affected areas, our buildings have been spared the serious damage that has incapacitated other healthcare facilities. However, our employees are operating under a severe water and electricity conservation protocol. Gasoline is being rationed on a department-by-department basis to ensure that essential services can be maintained.

Considering the possibility of significant airborne or patient-borne radioactivity, 24-hour radiation monitoring is in place. At present, background radiation levels at the medical center are below those reported for the city center, from which our campus is somewhat isolated.

Press conferences are impractical at this time, but news will be released periodically in this format. Also, a personal, Western perspective on our situation is available at [www.cbbsweb.org](http://www.cbbsweb.org), through the courtesy of the California Blood Bank Association. Please click on **General Items** under **Fast-Breaking News**.

Fukushima Medical University is operating in a *risk* area, not a *disaster* area, and employees are coping with scarce resources. A spirit of service persists to meet the needs of those in far more difficult circumstances.