

PRESS RELEASE

## Japan's first Stool Donation Facility to Open in 2025

### Gut microbiota from the people of Tsuruoka City, to patients around the world

(Yamagata, Japan, August 5, 2024) Metagen Therapeutics, Inc. (Headquarters: Tsuruoka City, Yamagata Prefecture; President & CEO: Taku Nakahara), a company focusing on drug discovery and development of intestinal microbiome-based therapeutics for various diseases, will open Japan's first stool donation facility, tentatively named "Tsuruoka Gut Microbiota Donation Site," in Tsuruoka Science Park in Tsuruoka City, Yamagata Prefecture. The facility is scheduled to open in April 2025.



Rendering of the facility based on the concept of "toilets people want to frequent."

#### **■ Commitment to design that caters to the user; stool donation in “toilets people want to frequent”**

This facility is conceptualized for residents of the Shonai area, including Tsuruoka City, to donate their stools **at “toilets people want to frequent.”** The facility is designed to be so comfortable that gut microbiota donors are motivated to donate their stools regularly.

The design of this site was inspired by Finnish architect Alvar Aalto's Paimio Sanatorium's concept. The large windows overlooking Mt. Gassan brings in abundant light; the zoning and coloring of space brings comfort and security to visitors allowing for intuitive traffic flow. Gut microbiota donors will visit this facility on a daily basis to donate their stools in a specially designed toilet for stool donation. The stools are then transported in a designated box to the processing facility in the adjacent room, where gut microbiota are extracted from the stools.

#### **■ Utilization of gut microbiota in medicine**

Recent studies have shown that disruption of the intestinal microbiota is associated with a variety of diseases, including cancer, ulcerative colitis, and Parkinson's disease<sup>\*1</sup>. As research progresses, the use of gut microbiota in medicine is growing around the world, and drugs based on gut microbiota have already been approved in the United States and Australia.

In Japan, "Antibiotic Fecal Microbiota Transplantation (A-FMT) " for ulcerative colitis is currently being implemented as an Advanced Medical Care B Program, a fast-track program which seeks to facilitate patient access to novel but promising healthcare technologies with governmental assessments toward National Health Insurance coverage. In addition, our project to develop a therapeutic drug for ulcerative colitis using gut microbiota has been adopted by the Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED) as the "FY2024 Strengthening Program for Pharmaceutical Startup Ecosystem : 4th Call for Proposal from Pharmaceutical Startups." In order to promote the development of medical technology and drugs using gut microbiota in Japan and to deliver gut microbiota medicine to patients in Japan as well as globally, the cooperation of donors who provide stool is essential.

Gut microbiota extracted at this stool donation facility will mainly be used as raw materials for pharmaceutical products, and a portion will also be used as raw materials for the solution used in intestinal FMT (Fecal Microbiota Transplantation). In order to ensure a high level of safety, the extraction of gut microbiota will be conducted at the facility under thorough quality control.

Taku Nakahara, CEO of Metagen Therapeutics, commented on the opening of the stool donation facility in Tsuruoka.



"Hello everyone in Tsuruoka! I am very pleased to announce the opening of Japan's first stool donation facility in Tsuruoka City. Tsuruoka City is the first food capital in Japan to be recognized as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy. It is also a city that is highly interested in science and health, with more than 10,000 residents and workers participating in an ongoing local health survey. For me personally, my encounter with Tsuruoka led me to start a company that aims to help patients through the power of gut microbiota, and Tsuruoka is a place of great significance to me. I would like to create a model for saving patients around the world with the people of Tsuruoka! With this in mind, we decided to open our stool donation facility here.

"Tsuruoka Gut Microbiota Donation Site" is not only for Metagen Therapeutics and donors. With the cooperation of the local community and many companies in and outside of the prefecture, we plan to contribute to Tsuruoka as the center of a new ecosystem and to expand this model nationwide in the future.

I live in Higashikawa-cho, Hokkaido, a town with quality water and good rice at the foot of Mt. Asahidake. Hence I understand the value of living in a town like Tsuruoka, surrounded by the three mountains of Dewa and delicious rice. With the help of the people of Tsuruoka, I wish to establish a model in which a region of Japan with such a rich dietary life can help patients around the world."

Creative direction and space design by Dentsu Inc. and SOUDA TOKYO LLC.

•Ryo Sasaki (Dentsu Inc.)

"The novel activity of "stool donation" is a way of spreading health to the world through stool. In order to promote this, it is essential that stool donation facilities become an integral part of the lives of donors and become places where they can access often.

We have been working with experts in various fields to determine the ideal space and experience for the people of Tsuruoka to use this facility safely and comfortably, and for a new donation culture to be fostered here. Our goal is to create a café-like space where people can stay in comfort, free from the conventional idea of being around restrooms.

In turn, making the stool donation facility a clean and secure place for donors will help foster patient confidence in the revolutionary new approach to gut microbiota medicine.

We aim this to be a hub where patients and donors are connected and new partnerships are formed with various companies and organizations.

We will continue to pursue this vision by collaborating and providing creative support."

•Shun Mayuyama (SOUDA TOKYO, LLC)

"In considering the ideal form of this facility, we felt it was very important that donors living in Tsuruoka be able to feel comfortable with the idea of donating stools into their daily lives.

We focused on space design, toilet bowl design, flow lines, interior, and lighting to provide both privacy and comfort and to make donating a stress-free daily experience.

While incorporating the rich natural environment of Tsuruoka, we aimed to realize the concept of "toilets people want to frequent" through the design of each of these elements.

We will continue to make every effort to create an appropriate space so that the local people can feel proud of the fact that Tsuruoka is home to an advanced cultural and

creative center of dedication."

### **Facility Overview**

Location	246-2, Mizukami, Kakuganji, Tsuruoka-shi, Yamagata
total floor space	210 square meters
Scheduled completion date	March 2025 (scheduled)
Scheduled opening date	April 2025 (scheduled)

### **What is a microbiome/microbiota?**

The human intestinal tract is home to more than 40 trillion<sup>\*2</sup> gut bacteria of about 1,000 species, and the population of bacteria is called microbiome or microbiota.

### **What is Fecal Microbiota Transplantation (FMT)?**

FMT is a treatment method in which the gut microbiota contained in the stool of a healthy person is transplanted into the intestine of a patient to rebuild the patient's intestinal environment. In January 2023, the Antibiotic Fecal Microbiota Transplantation (A-FMT) for ulcerative colitis was started as an Advanced Medical Care B Program. Metagen Therapeutics, a collaborating research institute for this novel but promising technology, provides platform services related to stool donor recruitment, stool specimen management, gut microbiota solution preparation and quality control, and other services that enable doctors to conduct FMT.

<Reference press release>

Antibiotic Fecal Microbiota Transplantation for Ulcerative Colitis Patients Approved Under Japan's Advanced Medical Care Program

[https://www.metagentx.com/en/news/230104\\_senshinb/](https://www.metagentx.com/en/news/230104_senshinb/)

### **About J-Kinso Bank, an intestinal microflora bank**

The "J-Kinso Bank" is an gut microbiota bank with the aim of developing medical technologies and drugs that utilize gut microbiota. Metagen Therapeutics has been recruiting stool donor candidates through its website (<https://www.j-kinso-bank.com>)

since April 2024.

### **About Metagen Therapeutics**

The company has been accelerating its drug discovery and development work on gut microbiome-based therapeutics for various diseases such as cancer, ulcerative colitis, and Parkinson's disease. It aims for social impact through medical care and drug discovery.

Metagen Therapeutics, Inc. is a biotech startup founded in 2020 with the mission of "Living up to the hopes of patients through microbiome science" and to create social impact through medical care and drug discovery based on gut microbiome research.

Co-founded by a Juntendo University physician and researchers from Keio University and Tokyo Institute of Technology, the company is promoting social implementation of Fecal Microbiota Transplantation (FMT) and FMT-driven reverse translational drug discovery. Currently, the company is focusing on development in the areas of immunological diseases (inflammatory bowel disease), oncology, central nervous system diseases.

For more information, please visit <https://www.metagentx.com/en/> or follow us on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/metagentx/>

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### **<Company Profile>**

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2. Sender, R., Fuchs, S. & Milo, R. Revised Estimates for the Number of Human and Bacteria Cells in the Body. PLoS Biol. 14, e1002533 (2016)