

The North Carolina Japan Center gave me the courage to open my business.

~Meeting the demand and leading to entrepreneurship~

I am pleased to announce the opening of Kono and Associates, LLC (e-kono.com) on May 1, 2021. I would like to express my appreciation to the North Carolina Japan Center for serving as a bridge between me and the needs of the Japanese community in establishing this new company.

In February 2020, the NC Japan Center asked me to conduct a seminar on the U.S. health insurance basics, which is in high demand in Japanese communities in NC. They have been looking for a qualified person who knows Japanese and the U.S. health care system, has a professional background, and qualifications as well as giving lectures in Japanese.

Since I have provided Medicare counseling to local senior residents at a senior center in Chapel Hill as a certified Medicare SHIP counselor, I recognized that even American people without a language barrier are confused about the health system. If that is the case, imagine how Japanese are confused about Medicare and health insurance information. It is much more difficult for Japanese people to understand them. So, I decided to accept an offer as a seminar speaker if I could help Japanese people.

The seminar was changed to a webinar due to COVID-19. It was the first time I ever spoke in a live online seminar. Thanks to the NC Japan Center's guidance, the U.S. Health Insurance basics seminar was successful and received a great response. This lecture led to expanding online seminars throughout the United States. After the seminars, I decided to establish a company to provide the latest information and consultation services for Japanese on health insurance in the U.S. as a response to strong demand from many seminar participants.

I am looking forward to providing high quality service to contribute to Japanese communities working with the North Carolina Japan Center.

Sincerely,

Keiko Kono

President

Kono and Associates, LLC