

Press Release

February 8, 2023

TOHO HOLDINGS and AIST Establish Cooperative Research Lab --Start Joint Research for Realization of Universal Medical Access--

TOHO HOLDINGS CO., LTD. (Headquarters: Setagaya-ku, Tokyo; Representative Director, CEO: Atsushi Udoh ; hereinafter "TOHO HOLDINGS") hereby announces that it has agreed with the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (Tokyo Headquarters: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo; President and CEO: Kazuhiko Ishimura ; hereinafter "AIST") to establish a cooperative research laboratory in AIST Tsukuba Center on April 1, 2023 toward the realization of universal medical access,* where all patients can receive high-quality medical care regardless of the skill level of medical and nursing personnel or where patients live. As a part of this agreement, the two parties have started joint research since January 2023.

1. Purpose of Establishment of Cooperative Research Laboratory and Joint Research

TOHO HOLDINGS is a corporate group active in medical, nursing and healthcare fields, engaged in pharmaceutical wholesaling, dispensing pharmacy, manufacturing and sales of pharmaceuticals, and development and provision of customer support systems under the corporate slogan “Total Commitment to Good Health”. TOHO HOLDINGS also proactively promotes initiatives for regional medical collaboration, nursing and home care.

AIST, one of the largest public research institutes in Japan, focuses on the creation and practical application of technologies useful to Japanese industry and society as well as on the transfer of innovative technological seeds for commercialization and social implementation. It also conducts R&D from a central and pioneering position in the national innovation ecosystem, based on changes in the environment surrounding innovation and national strategies formulated in light of such changes.

TOHO HOLDINGS and AIST have reached this agreement in the belief that by combining TOHO HOLDINGS’ knowledge of the medical industry and know-how cultivated through the development of customer support systems and logistics functions with AIST’s advanced technological development capabilities, they will be able to contribute to improving medical accessibility. The two parties will establish a cooperative research laboratory and conduct joint research in a bid to solve various issues related to access to medical care, such as the shortage of medical personnel resulting from a shrinking workforce and widening regional disparities in medical care, and to realize universal medical access, where everyone can provide or enjoy high-quality medical and nursing care at ease. In addition, TOHO HOLDINGS is determined to nurture R&D personnel through this initiative, thereby strengthening its internal R&D infrastructure.

2. Outline of Joint Research

Theme:	R&D of technologies necessary to establish a system that can deliver increasingly complex, diverse, and sophisticated medical care to every corner of the country
Period:	January 1, 2023 to March 31, 2026

3. Outline of Cooperative Research Laboratory

Name:	TOHO HOLDINGS-AIST Universal Medical Access Cooperative Research Laboratory
Place:	Tsukuba Center, AIST (Tsukuba City, Ibaraki)
Period:	April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2026
Research structure:	Employees selected from TOHO HOLDINGS and its group companies are on loan to AIST. AIST's researchers from various fields participate.
Other:	They will also develop human resources in R&D through joint research.

*Universal medical access:

A system that allows everyone to provide high quality medical and nursing care without anxiety, regardless of the skill level of the medical or nursing personnel. It also refers to the highest level of medical accessibility, which allows people to access necessary and sufficient medical and nursing care regardless of where they live, even in the event of a disaster or emergency.