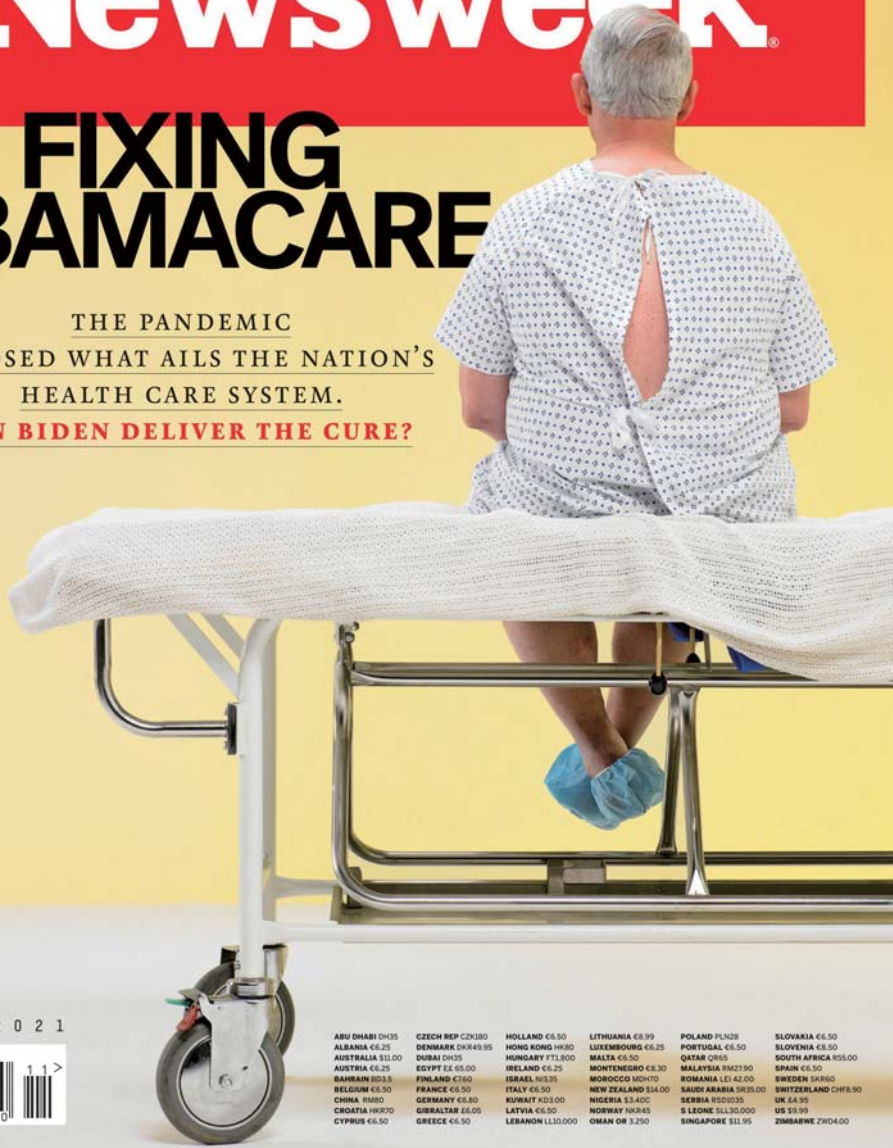


# The World's Best Hospitals 2021

# INTERNATIONAL Newsweek

## FIXING OBAMACARE

THE PANDEMIC  
EXPOSED WHAT AILS THE NATION'S  
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.  
CAN BIDEN DELIVER THE CURE?



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CONTENT BY THE WORLDFOILIO

## Kawamoto Corporation: the healthcare materials leader at the forefront of the COVID-19 battle

Established in 1914 to supply bandages during World War One, Kawamoto today finds itself at the forefront of the war against COVID-19, where it is supplying high-quality infection control materials and protective equipment.



"We believe that it is necessary to positively consider working with overseas partners if there are any promising companies with excellent technologies or services"

Makoto Fukui, President, Kawamoto Corporation

### Kawamoto's proud history

In 1914, the same year that World War One began, Shinnosuke Kawamoto founded a family store manufacturing and selling bandage materials. Due to the war, demand for bandages was high and Kawamoto's factory was constructed in Osaka in 1916 shortly after the store was founded. As the Great Kanto earthquake occurred that year, the demand for bandages rapidly increased. "For a period of two months, there was only enough time to sleep for three hours a day," explains Kawamoto's current president, Makoto Fukui. "To meet the rising demand, the Osaka plant was relocated and rebuilt. It is still in operation today and marks its 98th year of history this year."

As of 2021, 107 years have passed since the founding of Kawamoto, which has and continues to lead the healthcare materials industry in Japan. Kawamoto's corporate philosophy includes the phrase "improvement of society's health and hygiene." This philosophy is based on the company's desire since its founding - to resolve the issue of adequate healthcare materials not reaching the people during wartime or in the event of earthquakes.

"Recently, there have not been any shortages of gauze or band-

dages, but there have been shortages of items such as face masks, disinfectant and protective gowns due to the spread of COVID-19 last year, making it a year that made us think about our philosophy of 'improvement of society's health and hygiene' again," explains Mr. Fukui.

### Products in focus

At present, Kawamoto handles not only bandage materials, but also products in a wide range of categories including infection control, surgery, oral care, nursing, and health and safety protective gear. Of these, the most focus is being placed on infection control products and oral care products.

"Focus has been placed back on infection control products due to the spread of COVID-19," says Mr. Fukui. "We have many products including

age." As one ages, the mouth tends to become dry, chewing becomes more difficult and it also becomes harder to swallow. To address these symptoms, Kawamoto aims to provide sponges and gels to be used to clean, moisturize and massage the oral cavity to keep it clean and ensure people are able to eat properly.

"It is said that longevity is increasing, but we believe it is important to have a long healthy lifespan," adds Mr. Fukui. "It is our belief that being able to eat with one's own mouth even in old age leads to a healthy lifespan."

### History of overseas expansion

Kawamoto has a very long history overseas, starting with the establishment of the Republic of China Qingdao Office in 1940. In 1946, the Export Division was established



Ster Gel

face masks, gloves and eye shields, in addition to hand sanitizer and environmental disinfectant wipes. In particular, the sales volume of hand sanitizer has increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Kawamoto's hand sanitizer is characterized by its fragrance and moisturizing effect. The fragrance has been created by adding natural aromatic oils in order to make hand sanitizing more enjoyable for medical professionals. Repeated use tends to cause chapped hands, but the inclusion of a moisturizing ingredient makes the product less likely to cause chapping."

Kawamoto's oral care products have been developed with the desire to "make people smile by continuing to experience the joy of eating even in old

own brand, KBM. "The KBM brand has penetrated the Middle East market through sales activities of our products over many years, and sales to the region have now become a major pillar supporting our overseas business," Mr. Fukui explains.



Hi-Medi Plast ENDORACTOR

### Future overseas expansion

Most of Kawamoto's products are disposables, and due to the nature of its products, it is necessary to comply with different medical device regulations in each country. As such, Kawamoto has grown by utilizing local distributors with abundant knowledge of the local healthcare industry and market in each country. In particular, growth has been pronounced in Southeast Asian countries, where there is demand for high-quality products worth their price. In order to cater to this demand, Kawamoto has decided to assign sales personnel overseas.

"Moving forward, we will further expand the area covered by our distributor business and believe that it is necessary to positively consider working with overseas partners if there are any promising companies with excellent technologies or services," says Mr. Fukui.

"We also see M&A and joint ventures as necessary options for gaining overall strength and providing the capability to respond to change. If there are any partners enabling both sides to enjoy synergies, we will powerfully push to work together with a sense of speed."

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KAWAMOTO CORPORATION  
OSAKA · JAPAN



MOUTH PURE series