

Healthcare New Frontier - Initiatives based on the Concept of ME-BYO

Kanagawa Prefecture



Background

Kanagawa Prefecture is one of the fastest-ageing regions in Japan; a “super-aged society” (*) where the proportion of elderly people aged 65 or over of the total population of the prefecture exceeded 21% in 2013. It is expected that the ageing will continue to progress rapidly, and the elderly aged 85 or over will account for the largest proportion of the population in the prefecture by 2050. It is obvious that in the super-aged society with its decreasing population, the current social systems will not be sustainable because the national capabilities and economic strength will decline, while the burden of medical and care expenses will increase. There is a need to reform the social systems from a fresh perspective.

In response, Kanagawa Prefectural Government has been promoting a variety of initiatives by establishing the “Healthcare New Frontier” policy to overcome various challenges caused by the super-aged society.

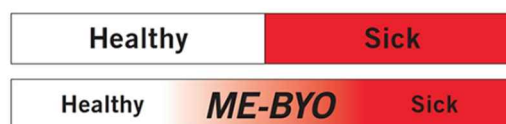
Purpose of Project

Through promoting the Healthcare New Frontier initiatives, the prefecture aims to extend the healthy longevity (*) of the people of Kanagawa, and to make the prefecture an engine of economic growth, which will lead to realising a “society of security, health and purposeful lives”.

Outline of Project

The prefecture thinks that physical and mental conditions are continuously changing between the states of

health and sickness, instead of clearly defined conditions of being either healthy or sick. The “ME-BYO” concept covers the entire process of this change, and the status of “curing ME-BYO” means bringing a person’s physical and mental conditions closer to the healthier state.



The prefecture aims to realise a society in which everyone can live healthier and longer lives, to create the “ME-BYO Industry”, a new industry that originated in Kanagawa, and to expand its markets, in order to overcome the challenges caused by the super-aged society by integrating two approaches, “curing ME-BYO” and “pursuing cutting-edge medical treatment and technology”.

From among a wide range of Kanagawa’s initiatives based on the concept of “ME-BYO”, the initiatives for creating the ME-BYO Industry and for expanding its market, are introduced here.

(1)What is the ME-BYO Industry?

The prefecture defines the “ME-BYO Industry” as an industry which, in addition to conventional prevention/diagnosis methods, creates the “value” of leading healthy lives by optimizing both physical and mental conditions with products and services that lead to “curing ME-BYO”. The prefecture is promoting the creation of this industry as it originated in Kanagawa.

(2) Working towards creating the ME-BYO Industry

The prefecture is promoting initiatives to create the “ME-BYO Industry” which will provide products and services aimed at “curing ME-BYO”, through efforts to disseminate the concept of “ME-BYO” and to transform people’s behaviour. The initiatives also include solving various different issues such as verifying the effectiveness of products and services, and reforms to remove any regulatory obstacles to the creation of the industry.

(3) Establishment of the “Association for ME-BYO Industry”

In August 2014, the “Association for ME-BYO Industry” composed of members from a wide variety of industries and others related to “ME-BYO” was established to serve as a forum for consultation and best practices to solve problems in creating the ME-BYO Industry. The association aims to extend the healthy longevity of the people of Japan and revitalize Japan’s economy by creating a new industry, the “ME-BYO Industry”, which could become a growth industry in the super-aging society, utilizing initiatives such as National Strategic Special Zones. It also aims to create a new healthcare system and extend these activities both domestically and overseas.



Association for ME-BYO Industry

(4) Spreading the concept of “ME-BYO”

The Governor of Kanagawa Prefecture used the word “ME-BYO” during a visit to the United States, to explain the concept which was not familiar to the local people. As the word received a favorable response, the prefecture filed a trademark registration for the

word “ME-BYO” in January 2014. It was registered in June 2014.

The prefecture is promoting efforts to spread the concept of “ME-BYO” by actively implementing PR activities including the use of the trademark “ME-BYO” in PR magazines and pamphlets.

(5) Certification of the “ME-BYO BRAND”

The prefecture is working on the branding of “ME-BYO” by certifying specific excellent products and services related to the ME-BYO Industry as “ME-BYO BRAND”.

Progress and Achievements

In October 2015, the international symposium “ME-BYO Summit Kanagawa” was held to discuss ME-BYO from various perspectives such as advanced technologies and industrial applications, by inviting experts from a variety of fields including academia, the private sector, as well as organizations at home and abroad. On the basis of discussions during the summit, the “ME-BYO Summit Kanagawa Declaration” was adopted, which specified the future direction of initiatives, and disseminated the concept of “ME-BYO” to the world.



ME-BYO Summit Kanagawa 2015 in Hakone

Effects of Project

Some member companies of the Association for ME-BYO Industry have commercialized the achievements of their projects and have been steadily expanding their markets. The concept of ME-BYO has also been spreading.

Challenges and Solutions

The prefecture aims to solve the challenges raised in the “ME-BYO Summit Kanagawa Declaration” such as transformation of people’s behaviour, human resource development, pursuing cutting-edge technology and establishing scientific evidence for ME-BYO, and to form a new social system.

Outlook

To expand markets related to the ME-BYO Industry, the prefecture will promote efforts to further popularize ME-BYO-related products and services among the people of Kanagawa, and proactively approach overseas markets that are expected to have a great demand, thereby expanding international business opportunities.



ME-BYO Japan 2016

Reference URL

<http://www.pref.kanagawa.jp/div/0121/>

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Meaning of Terminology/Coined Words Used in this Project

* Super-aged society: A society where the aging rate (proportion of elderly people aged 65 or over of the total population) has exceeded 21%.

* Healthy longevity: Length of life during which an individual can live without limitations on their daily activities due to health problems.