



# Chicago Company Announces Industry's First 100% Biodegradable Medical Gowns

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When international shipping of both B2B and consumer products came to a startling halt amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Dave Fliss knew he had a problem on his hands. As the Co-Founder and President of Welmed, a leading manufacturer of disposable medical products, Dave had spent 25 years building relationships with and sourcing from overseas companies. As of summer 2020, there was suddenly no way for him – or anyone else in his industry – to get the items his customers desperately needed. With demand for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at an all-time high, Fliss took swift action: he decided to open a factory in his hometown of Chicago. “I had the initial thought on a Thursday and by Saturday I was signing a lease,” he says.

That 18,000 square foot factory is now home to PPE Plus, Chicago’s newest manufacturer of American-made PPE products. With initial production beginning in July 2020, the factory is now fully operational and is supplying large hospital systems, government agencies, outpatient surgery centers and more. The PPE Plus factory has the capacity to produce 2,000,000 FDA approved items per month. All aspects of PPE Plus’ products – from raw materials to final production – are 100% made in the USA. In addition to being able to deliver much-needed Thumb Loop Isolation Gowns (used in non-surgical medical settings) to healthcare providers nationwide, Dave Fliss also saw PPE Plus and its factory as an opportunity to support the community. He chose to build in a Federally Designated HUBZone (Historically Underutilized Business Zone) in the Little Village neighborhood. Looking to stimulate the local economy, Fliss completed the project without any city or state grants. He also focused on job creation. “At a time when unemployment was on the rise, PPE Plus was *creating* jobs,” he explains. “We specifically hired workers from the neighborhood, all of whom are paid above minimum wage. We are really proud to employ such a diverse workforce.”

## THE GOGREEN GOWN

PPE Plus recently unveiled their GoGreen gowns, which completely bio-assimilate (bio-assimilation is the complete breakdown of organic elements without remaining microplastics.)

“Our GoGreen Thumb Loop Isolation Gowns will decompose in 6 months in a landfill environment,” says Fliss. The vibrantly colored gowns do not require special storage or handling so medical personnel can dispose of the gowns per their employer’s standard procedures. “We believe this is a game-changer not just for PPE Plus, but for the medical industry and the environment as a whole.”