

IT'S MEDICAL TOURISM ...

**IT'S NEW
AND
BOOMING ...**

MYTHS

**PATIENTS ARE GOING TO
CHEAP, LOW QUALITY HEALTHCARE ...**

**OF
MEDICAL**

**ASIAN
HEALTHCARE
DESTINATIONS
THREATEN THE
FACILITIES OF
THE WEST ...**

**THERE ARE MANY
EXCELLENT HEALTHCARE DESTINATIONS
IN THE WORLD ...**

TOURISM



USA

Americans will travel for treatment

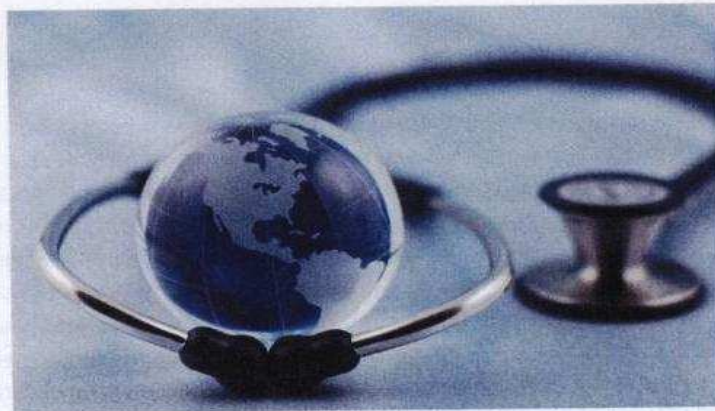
A major new survey suggests that more than one in three Americans will consider travelling overseas for treatment.

The "2008 Survey of Health Care Consumers", a representative poll of more than 3,000 Americans between the ages of 18 and 75, conducted by the Deloitte Center for Health Solutions (www.deloitte.com/us/healthcareconsumersurvey), looks at US consumer attitudes to how and where they purchase their healthcare.

Around 27 percent will give general consideration to travelling outside the US for treatment. Although 39 percent will consider medical treatment overseas, the quality has to be equal to or better than in the US, and the total medical and travel cost must save at least 50 percent on the US price. This is encouraging for the medical travel industry. But these figures have to be used with great caution. Before hospitals and agencies start leaping with joy at the potential income, it must be pointed out that there is an enormous difference between considering going overseas and actually doing so.

According to the official census running population figures for the US, the population now is 303 million. This includes 180 million adults aged between 20 and 64. Even if only one in four will consider overseas treatment, this gives a massive target market of 45 million.

The survey asked people about current medical travel history. An amazing 3 percent said that they had travelled outside the US for treatment in the 24 months to September 2007. Assuming statistical reliability, and only considering adults under retirement age, this suggests that two and a half million Americans travel abroad annually for medical treatment.



Although the national survey did not consider differences between states (ie states bordering Mexico may give different figures to mid West ones), it did highlight other fascinating areas. Fifty-one percent of Hispanics and 56 percent of Asians will consider overseas treatment. Men are keener than women on overseas treatment. Twenty-nine percent of those over 62 will consider it, compared to 37 percent of "baby boomers". Forty percent of those with non-state private medical insurance will consider it.

The Deloitte survey also shows that among Americans shopping for healthcare procedures, 38 percent might travel outside their own community for care and 12 percent have already travelled beyond their local areas. Eighty-eight percent would consider getting medical treatment outside their community if outcomes were better and the costs equal or lower. Obviously, Americans no longer see themselves only as patients, but as consumers wanting to take greater control of their healthcare.

CANADA

Star Hospitals launches

As medical travel agencies increase in number, to have any chance of success, new ones must offer something different.

StarHospitals.net (www.starhospitals.net) is a new, Canadian healthcare agency offering treatment abroad through a network of JCI/NABH/ISO accredited hospitals in India, Singapore and Thailand. It is a privately owned company with investors in India.

StarHospitals.net assists patients through a call centre staffed by medical professionals. Patients can call and speak with doctors and physician assistants who specialise in the care the patient needs, and receive information on which hospital is right for their procedure. The company can arrange a full package including travel and medical care. The target markets are individuals and businesses in Canada and the US. Star is currently partnered with the following hospitals, with additional partnerships in negotiation:

India

- Apollo Hospital Group (www.apollohospitals.com)

- Asian Heart Institute and Research Centre (www.asianheartinstitute.org)
- Escorts Heart Institute and Research Centre (www.ehirc.com)
- Fortis Healthcare Group (www.fortishealthcare.com)
- Frontier Lifeline (www.frontierlifeline.com)
- Max Healthcare (www.maxhealthcare.in)
- MIOT Hospitals (www.miothospitals.com)
- Madras Medical Mission (www.madrasmedicalmission.org)
- Wockhardt Hospitals (www.wockhardthospitals.net)

Singapore

- National Healthcare Group (www.nhg.com.sg)
- Pacific Healthcare (www.pachealthholdings.com)
- SingHealth (www.singhealth.com.sg)

Thailand

- Bangkok International Hospital (www.bangkokhospital.com)

The launch focus is on these three countries, as the company sees them as the best destinations for serious surgical procedures at an affordable cost.

There are plans to expand operations to other countries in the future.