



INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT ON MEDICAL TRAVEL, WELLNESS & RETIREMENT

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Expert Says RP Poised for Huge Gains in Medical Tourism

MANILA, Philippines – Medical tourism in the Philippines is quietly but surely bringing benefits into the country—but not only in terms of revenues. A look at the big picture shows that the benefits are larger, more substantial and more long-term than what can be quantified simply in financial terms. Sadly, this big picture is what some critics of medical tourism miss.

It's undeniable that medical tourism will bring additional revenue to the Philippine economy—after all, it is projected to be a \$188 billion industry by 2013 as more and more people seek quality healthcare overseas. The Philippine government estimates that medical tourism could bring in as much as \$3 billion into the economy in the next three years.

And yes, the direct beneficiaries of these added revenues are the country's hospitals and medical professionals including doctors, nurses, etc. The advantages, however, don't just stop there. As more and more overseas patients--whether Filipino-Americans and others of Filipino descent, or foreign tourists--come in for health services in the Philippines, it will create a domino effect that would result in, essentially, better healthcare for everybody.

International accreditation

Today there are three hospitals in the Philippines that are accredited by the Joint Commission International (JCI); these are the Medical City in Pasig, Chong Hua Hospital in Cebu, and St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City. As more and more hospitals strive to achieve international accreditation as part of medical tourism, these hospitals will need to upgrade their systems, services and personnel as well.

"Accreditation agencies enhance the quality of care by providing quality standards and measuring hospital performance against these benchmarks. As Philippines embarks on the business of medical tourism, more and more reputed international accrediting bodies like NABH of India will have their presence in the country. These accreditations will improve the overall quality of healthcare delivery, not only for the foreign patients, but for the local Filipino patients too," said Dr. Sanjiv Malik, Honorary Chairman of IMWell Summit.

Producer



Host



Knowledge Partners



As medical tourism thrives, the benchmark for healthcare across hospitals and wellness centers will also be higher thus improving the quality of healthcare in the country.

More knowledge, technology transfers

As medical facilities upgrade their standards, it's inevitable that Filipino physicians, nurses and other professionals will also need to increase their skills, knowledge and competence leading to continuous knowledge enhancement momentum. Such a transfer of knowledge and technology is one of the effects of globalization—which is what medical tourism is: the globalization of healthcare.

More jobs, reduction and reversal of “brain-drain”

There are 1,723 hospitals in the country with a total bed capacity of about 95,000. And yet, the Philippines is unable to stop the exodus of nurses and doctors who choose to work abroad for higher pay.

“Medical tourism will create new jobs and enhance the working conditions to reduce and reverse the brain drain of Filipino healthcare professionals,” continues Dr. Malik.

It is estimated that employment in the health and wellness sector has increased by 13.2% from 2003 to 2005, numbering to around 238,955 employees.

“A thriving medical tourism sector in the Philippines, in turn, will also create more businesses—not only in the healthcare industry but also in other sectors like wellness, hospitality, travel and tourism,” said Joyce Alumno, Conference Director and also Secretary General of HEAL Philippines.

Related businesses that will benefit from medical tourism include travel agencies; healthcare concierge services; hotels, resorts and spas; vehicle rentals; and even the local souvenir shops and food stalls that will serve medical tourists at the Philippine destinations where they spend their recovery time.

“It's unrealistic to say that medical tourism is the one shot solution to all the problems of healthcare in the Philippines. However, medical tourism will facilitate and enhance the speed of healthcare reforms in the country,” ended Dr. Sanjiv Malik.

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Honors Integrated Marketing (HIM) Communications Inc. is a full-service marketing communications firm that provides a complete suite of integrated marketing solutions for a wide range of high-profile clients.

HIM is a staunch advocate of Philippine medical tourism and has been instrumental in the grand launch of this program in the country, organizing the international congress and expo that put the spotlight on the Philippines as a haven of health and wellness. Because of this, the Public Relations Society of the Philippines has honored HIM with the Anvil Award of Merit under Institutional and Corporate PR Programs – Public Affairs, Tourism category.

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