

HOUSTON IS GROWING AS A MEDICAL TOURISM DESTINATION



According to a recent study initiated by the Texas Medical Center, Houston is attracting a growing number of medical tourists - 20,000 per year. The medical tourism business is being rebuilt for the past two years and the Texas Medical Center plans to be recognized as one of the top healthcare destinations globally. They aim at increase their affiliations with foreign medical facilities and hospitals, private companies as well as medical schools around the globe.

There is neither a unified advertising nor marketing campaign running currently, but it is being planned to promote the city as a medical tourism destination. A number of hospitals are advertising and marketing themselves at an individual level by creating international patient centers. Some are also providing luxurious suites in the hospital to promote medical tourism.

Almost 21 hospitals, eight academic and research institutions, 13 support organizations, six nursing programmes, three medical schools, three public health organizations, two pharmacy schools, two universities and a dental school are included in the Texas Medical Center. About 7.4 million people attend the place annually. The huge number of patient beds and annual surgeries that are about 7000 and 171,000 respectively have made The Texas Medical Center (TMC) to claim itself as the world's largest medical complex.

Patients around the world are accompanied by their families and they stay for surgeries and treatments for many months generating huge amount of money for the hospitals as well as the local economy.

It is estimated that for every \$1 a Houston medical tourist spends on medical care, accommodation, travel, food, and entertainment, the economy gains \$2 by generating business and jobs.

Most of the foreign patients are from Mexico and Saudi Arabia due to the establishment of medical and business connections in both countries by the Houston Methodist, Memorial Hermann Health System and University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center.

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