

ASIAN ECONOMY BOOSTER - MEDICAL TOURISM



While Asian economies report considerable increase in recent months, there seems to be a new booster which will become one of the major drives for local income: Medical Tourism in the area is expected to generate billions of dollars within a few years.

Many countries have noticed how profitable medical tourism is and specifically the Asian region has given rise to several economies which try to establish a reputation of accessible quality medical care. **Medical tourism is increasing in popularity and the trend is likely to continue in the upcoming years.**

According to the Asian Medical Tourism Analysis (2008-2012), **revenue from the industry is likely to grow at a rate of 17% until 2012.** The main players on the market in Asia are India, South Korea, and Thailand. The Chinese are quite openly competing for a key role as well; however, there are many critics who claim the quality of care here is simply not sufficient yet.

Many medical experts agree the success of the industry is threefold. Medical tourists are very savvy in terms of their spending and realize traveling for certain treatment pays off. Many U.S. citizens can save thousands of dollars by having a surgery done in Thailand, for example. Also, some insurance companies encourage medical tourism and incentivize their clients' trips abroad. In many cases, **medical tourists seek out services unavailable to them in their home country**, the so-called 'abortion tourism' for instance has often been discussed in this context.

Many experts point out that it is necessary to choose very carefully. There are known cases, many of which relate to China, of unsuccessful surgeries with insufficient aftercare. Patients are often encouraged to consider all the aspects of their desired treatment before making a final decision. Not only medical care, quality personnel, adequate equipment and services are in question; legal systems, for instance vary, and it may not be as easy to seek any kind of settlement should worse come to worst.

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