

MEDICAL TOURISM IN MEXICO GENERATE SIGNIFICANT REVENUES



Around 1.2 million travelers from different parts of the world go to Mexico to undergo medical procedures that cost twice as much in their countries of origin or are not covered by their insurance.

For Mexico, the medical tourism industry represents revenues of 23 billion US dollars, a figure on par with the income of foreign currency registered last year.

Among the states with the greatest potential in the sector are Baja California Norte, Tamaulipas, Quintana Roo and the Riviera Maya.

Mexico has positioned itself as the second most important country for medical tourism in the world, just below Thailand, which records 1.8 million travelers.

“Experts point that the main consumer in the world of these services is the American population, which looks for savings in health expenditure through high-quality alternatives, but with better prices than those offered in their country.

According to information from the Deloitte consultancy, one of the main reasons for American patients to travel to Mexico is how close both countries are to each other, the accessible air routes, and certified medical companies, which provide the full range of services, for example, airport shuttle transport as part of their medical services.

“In the US, citizens have a private health system, one of the most sophisticated and advanced in the world, but also the most expensive and without enough health insurance for vulnerable groups, such as the elderly,” explained Carlos Pantoja, lead partner of Deloitte in the hotel construction industry.

Therefore, 8 out of 10 travelers who visit Mexico with medical reasons come from the US, according to data from the Medical Tourism Association.

In addition, about 70% of medical tourists who come from the United States to the Aztec country live in three states: California, Texas and Arizona, states along the border that see Tijuana, Mazatlan, Chihuahua, Cabo San Lucas, Monterrey, and Mexico City as an opportunity to address their conditions. The border states are the regions with the highest revenues of this segment, however, states in the Mexican southeast are beginning to have a considerable increase.

According to information released by the Mexican Council for the Medical Tourism Industry (CMITM, in Spanish), the most recurrent medical conditions are heart diseases, lung diseases, diabetes, organ and tissue transplants, as well as dental treatments, where Mexico sees the highest influx of foreign patients looking for treatments of this kind.

On average, treatments in Mexico are between 30 and 50% cheaper than in the US. For example, gastric sleeve surgery costs 46% less in Mexico (about 8,900 USD); meanwhile, a rhinoplasty costs around 3,800 dollars, well below the 6,500 dollars that would cost in a US hospital.

Tijuana, the 'healthiest' destination

The border city of Tijuana, located in Baja California, records the highest inbound medical tourism in the country.

According to data from the Ministry of Tourism, this destination received 1.7 million patients and companions last year (both domestic and international), who underwent medical treatment in places such as the Tijuana Clinic for Cosmetic Dentistry.

"In 2018, Tijuana received 1.7 million patients and companions, mostly from the US, Canada, and states such as Jalisco, Sinaloa, Sonora, Nuevo León, and Mexico City, with revenues of 600 million USD," said the Secretary of Tourism, Miguel Torruco.

Durango creates the medical cluster

The Mexican state seeks to attract medical tourism to its hospitals, clinics and rehabilitation centers; therefore, the local tourism ministry announced the creation of a medical cluster to look for an opportunity in the US market and enter this tourism segment.

"We are interested in promoting medical tourism, so we announced the creation of this cluster that introduces a promotion and healthcare program for visitors, especially from the US, to attend in Durango," said Eleazar Gamboa, secretary of the local tourism authority.

Top 5 Medical Tourism Destinations (mln. of med. tourists)

Thailand	1.8
Mexico	1.2
Malaysia	0.88
India	0.85
Turkey	0.58
Singapore	0.52

Date: 2019-06-21

Article link: <https://www.tourism-review.com/medical-tourism-rise-in-popularity-news11062>