

The Age of Medical Tourism

An Interview with the Sampayo Brothers

CMI Medical Center is not your typical hospital development and brothers Patricio and Mauricio Sampayo are not your typical entrepreneurs either. Inspired by the “Medical City” concepts seen in Houston, Dallas and Austin the Sampayo brothers have managed to develop a budding 15 acre medical “shopping mall-like” campus in their hometown of Matamoros, Mexico- a five minute drive from Brownsville, Texas.

Hospital Centro Medico Internacional (CMI) is the 25-bed acute care hospital/surgical facility which anchors the U.S. style medical campus.

“CMI does offer very competitive pricing options for cash paying patients, which maybe of particular interest to the 47 million uninsured people currently living in the United States.”

--Lic. Patricio Sampayo
Administrative Director CMI

Hospital

Outfitted with the latest high-tech hospital equipment, CMI is among a growing trend of new multi-million dollar private hospital investments sprouting up throughout Mexico. The CMI Medical Center is home to over 55 medical specialists and sub-specialists, a physical rehabilitation center, a dialysis center, digital radiology center (CT, OPEN MRI), pathology lab, clinical laboratory, pharmacy, hospital and outpatient surgical center.

Hospital Centro Medico Internacional (CMI) has quickly positioned itself as the premier medical facility in the region and offers 24 hour emergency care by board certified physicians trained in Advanced Cardiac Life Support as well as Advanced Trauma Life Support. Although insured patients (from Mexico and the US) comprise the bulk of CMI’s clientele. CMI does offer very competitive pricing options for cash paying patients, which maybe of particular interest to the 47 million uninsured people currently living in the United States.

The Age of Medical Tourism

An interview with Patricio and Mauricio
Sampayo (CMI) Centro Medico Internacional.

What exactly is Medical Tourism?

Originally, medical tourism was a term used by travel agencies to describe the practice of traveling to another country to obtain health care. The industry bundled attractive medical packages with leisure aspects either before or after the surgery.

How big is the Medical Tourism Industry?

It’s huge, and it’s growing exponentially. India alone brings in over \$1 billion in revenues

a year in medical tourism, and this number is expected to increase to \$5 billion by the year 2012. They have become experts at marketing their talents worldwide.

What are the growth prospects for Medical Tourism in Mexico?

The idea of getting an affordable surgical procedure and a “piggy-back” vacation for 50% less than the total cost of the procedure alone in the US has gained popularity, especially with elective surgeries like Plastic surgery.

However, we see Mexico’s biggest opportunity for growth in servicing the more common (and unglamorous) procedures, with or without the tourism element. “We prefer to let the patient decide whether they want to fly in and fly out the next day for an outpatient knee surgery or whether they want to recover at a local country club or beach resort.”

What are the keys to success in the Medical Tourism Industry?

Quality, Speed (in programming) and Competitive Pricing are the key factors in successfully delivering global healthcare, but the greatest of them all is Quality. If you want to compete in the global marketplace then you have to be able to deliver quality care, consistently. This requires recruiting the best medical talent, investing in their continued development and upholding international standards of care with respect to treatment protocols and hospital infrastructure/technology.

“Quality, Speed and Competitive Pricing are the key factors in successfully delivering global healthcare, but the greatest of them all is Quality.”

--Lic. Mauricio Sampayo
Marketing Director CMI Hospital

What are Mexico’s challenges with respect to Medical Tourism?

The struggles of tapping in to any new market are endless, however, a key challenge for Mexico to overcome will be the continued investment in the latest and most Advanced Medical Technology.

A genuine commitment to deliver quality healthcare as defined by international standards implies investing in the best technologies available.

Currently, the high technology hurdle reduces the number of global healthcare providers in Mexico to a few national hospital chains and a handful of regional hospitals, like Centro Medico Internacional.

Regional Hospitals

Centro Medico Internacional (CMI)
Hospital San Jose Tec de Monterrey
Hospital ABC (Mexico DF)
OCA Hospital (Monterrey)

National Hospital Chains

Christus Muguerza
Hospital Angeles
Star Medica
CIMA

Who's Who in Medicine?

The number one question we get asked when patients hear about accessing care in Mexico is “how do I know who is who?”, referring to the quality of the hospital facilities in Mexico and more specifically to the experience of the medical specialists.

“And the reality is that, unless you’ve lived in the area of several years and have developed a large enough network of friends and family that may have been treated by one of the various specialists that practice medicine in the region and someone in that network had results that were to their satisfaction and then they shared their positive experience with you- you really don’t have a lot of information in order to make the best decision.”

I’m certainly not discounting local word of mouth, but as a patient. I would feel more comfortable with my healthcare decision if I had some additional information about the doctor and his or her level of experience and training, before I booked the appointment. Serving on the board of directors for the most reputable medical center in Matamoros (CMI Hospital), gives us access to a lot of information about our local doctors. Not only do we have a database of credentials, we’ve also had the opportunity to interact with hundreds of healthcare professionals over the years. The fact is that we have some extraordinary medical talent right in our backyard, our wish as business leaders is that the community take advantage of their knowledge and experience.

In the March through August editions of Staying Healthy, Centro Medico Internacional will be sponsoring the Who's Who in Medicine, Matamoros edition 2008. This special advertising section will highlight one specialty and profile five specialists every month. The August edition of the Who's Who in Medicine will profile over 100 medical professionals that practice in the Matamoros area.

Contact us at

admin@cmi-matamoros.com

Or visit our website at

www.cmi-matamoros.com