

American "Medical Tourism" Patients Head to Europe to Save Big on Healthcare

It's shocking but true. One out of six Americans has no health insurance. That's a staggering 46 million people in this country who are completely uninsured! Two million others have only high-deductible health insurance. Unfortunately I am one of them. When I was quoted \$7,000 in my hometown for the out-of-pocket cataract surgery I needed, I contacted my doctor friend in Europe for advice. A week later I was back home after a successful operation performed by a well-known eye surgeon in Germany. Total cost for my cataract procedure in Europe? Only \$1,000. Under-insured or non-insured Americans do have a choice, and more of us are seeking expert medical treatment overseas. Though there has been much media coverage about medical tourism in the "exotic" countries such as India, I myself prefer to stick closer to home. I made just a hop across the ocean for quality, affordable medical treatment in Europe. Unlike India and some other destinations further afield, I needed no long, expensive flights, no malaria shots, no visas, and no time to adjust to the culture. These advantages for having certain medical procedures performed in Europe (esp. spinal, eye, bariatric, knee, dental surgery, etc.) far outweigh the slightly higher costs in Europe. Medical costs in Europe, though a bit more than those in India, still average 40% to 80% less than for comparable procedures in the U.S.A. In addition, flights from the U.S. to Europe cost substantially less than flights to India or Thailand. Consider these sobering statistics gathered by European Medical Tourist (www.europeanmedicaltourist.com) on America's critical medical insurance and health care issues: * An estimated 46 million Americans (one in six people) have absolutely no health insurance. * Two million+ Americans carry only high-deductible medical insurance. * According to a recent Harvard University study, overwhelming medical costs contribute to almost 750,000 bankruptcies annually in the U.S., as even insured individuals face rising out-of-pocket medical expenses. * In the U.S.A., health-related spending rose 7.6% to \$1.68 trillion in 2003, consuming close to 15.3% of the \$11 trillion gross domestic product. * It was the fifth consecutive year that the cost of medical care increased faster than the economy, reported the Baltimore-based Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. * U.S. employer-paid health insurance premiums have soared 59% since 2000, according to the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and the Health Research and Educational Trust, nonprofit groups which study medical care. * In 2004, annual medical insurance premiums averaged \$9,950 for families of four and \$3,695 for individuals, the groups found. * Though the U.S.A. spends more money per capita on healthcare than any other country and has the latest medical technology, American healthcare lags behind that of most European countries in several categories. * According to the 2003 Health of Nations Global League Table, all of the top ten high-ranking countries in medical care are European nations. The United States ranks 17th on the list, after Israel. * Medical procedures in Europe can cost from 40% to 80% less than comparable surgery in the United States. * An estimated 7.5 million unnecessary medical and surgical procedures recommended by U.S physicians are performed yearly, writes Gary Null, Ph.D. A 1995 report by Milliman and Robertson, Inc. further concludes that nearly 60% of all surgeries done in America are medically unnecessary. No families or individuals in our country should be forced to let exorbitant medical costs turn their lives upside down. Small business owners and other non-insured or under-insured Americans deserve a quality, affordable option. We need exceptional medical care at decent prices. And more of us will continue to head to Europe to save big on quality medical treatment.

About the Author

They will discuss price and a diet, and long period of menopause between a. and other advice, including the mens health about, clearly.

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