

Medical tourism could save Quebec taxpayers millions



Surgery in France and India a safe and affordable alternative to the USA, says BC company

VANCOUVER – Sending patients overseas for surgeries could not only drastically cut wait times, but also save the Quebec government millions of dollars, a Vancouver-based medical tourism company says.

“Premier Charest and Health Minister Couillard has announced a plan which could help thousands of Quebecers escape their suffering,” said Karin Basaraba, spokesperson for MedSolution.com. “We feel medical

tourism has a big part to play in this plan.”

MedSolution.com arranges for patients to obtain surgeries, such as hip and knee replacements, in their partner hospitals in India and France – where prices are 30 to 90 per cent less than in the US. MedSolution.com is the only medical tourism company in North America who is partnered with hospitals in France – which was ranked by the World Health Organization as the number one health care system in the world.

“Premier Charest has stated that he wants to build one of the best health systems in the world,” Basaraba said. “Sending patients to the USA is not necessarily the best answer for patients or taxpayers. We can connect patients with the world’s best health system and save taxpayers millions in the process.”

The new plan states that after being on a wait list for six months, the province would first look to an outpatient clinic to deliver the service. But after nine months, the province would pay for surgeries elsewhere in Canada or even outside the country. He estimates this would cost the Quebec government an additional \$20 million a year.

But with prices in France and India dramatically cheaper than in Canada and the US, it would be more prudent to send patients overseas, said Basaraba. A sample MedSolution.com price comparison shows the savings that could be achieved (in USD):

Hip Replacement:	US- \$40,000	France- \$15,000	India- \$5,800	Potential Savings- \$25,000 – \$34,000
------------------	--------------	------------------	----------------	---

Bilateral Knee Replacement:	US- \$70,000	France- \$31,000	India- \$11,400	Potential Savings- \$39,000 – \$58,600
-----------------------------	--------------	------------------	-----------------	---

“Even if the province was to factor in travel expenses, there would still be significant savings,” Basaraba said. “We are thrilled the government has opened the doors to options for Quebecers. This legislation truly indicates people are ready for change in Quebec.”

But the doctor who won the Supreme Court ruling last summer said any amount of a wait time is still too much for people who are suffering.

"Reducing the wait from one year to six months is good, but it may not be enough for a patient suffering a great deal," said Dr. Jacques Chaoulli in a Montréal Gazette article. "People will nevertheless continue to suffer and die because of waiting for the public system."

Basaraba said at MedSolution.com, there is no need for patients to wait six months or even six weeks. If a patient has a valid passport, they could be booked at a French hospital in a matter of days. For India, the only delay involved would be an estimated two weeks processing time for a travel visa.

"We offer a safe and very affordable option for patients looking to escape surgical wait lists, Basaraba said. "There is no reason why patients should be forced to wait six months when they could be well and recovered by that time if they had traveled abroad for their surgery?"

Traditionally, medical centres in places like India and Malaysia have been the backbone of the medical tourism industry because they charge 50 to 90 per cent less than hospitals in the United States. But Basaraba said there's a growing demand for services in western nations like France because North American patients have a greater confidence in their health systems.

"When we talk about international health care, it doesn't get much better than Paris," said Antoine Guichard, media relations spokesman for MedSolution.com's three Parisian partner hospitals.

"Orthopedic and cardiac surgeries in France are generally 50 to 80 per cent less than what is charged in North America. We're also a world leader in advanced medical technologies and minimally invasive procedures. However, what really makes us an attractive destination is the opportunity to access to some of the most skilled physicians and surgeons in the world."

For example, Clinique des Franciscaines, one of MedSolution.com's hospitals in Paris, specializes in a hip replacement procedure which results in a small three inch scar. In North America, a typical hip replacement requires as many as three incisions, and results in a 12-inch scar.

Clinique des Franciscaines also makes use of computer-assisted knee surgeries, as well as blood recycling technologies which minimize a patient's need for blood products during surgery.

In addition to France and India, MedSolution.com is currently building partnerships in Brazil, Turkey, Poland, Malaysia, Costa Rica, Mexico and South Africa.

Patients who require surgical treatment can contact MedSolution.com to explore unique solutions to their health care needs. Please visit www.medsolution.com or call 1-800-984-0457.

-30-

Media contact:

Karin Basaraba, communication officer
MedSolution.com

karin@medsolution.com
604.638.4844 ext. 117
Toll free: 1.800.984.0457 ext. 117
Mobile: 778.388.6585