

# **Medical Tourism**

**Transcript**

Every year, about 1 million Americans travel to other countries for health care. This is called medical tourism. You can find splashy web sites advertising all kinds of medical treatment for a much lower price than what you would have to pay in the United States. The money you save on your treatment may be more than enough for a really nice vacation!

Medical tourism is big business. The total value, worldwide, is estimated at \$439 billion per year. Americans traveling internationally are a big part of that total.

The Centers for Disease Control offers advice on preparing for medical tourism. Complications can happen anywhere, and they are more of a problem when you are thousands of miles from home. A survey published in 2021 found a 5% rate of complications in medical tourists from the U.S.

In the 1970's, it was big news to see Prince Khalid of Saudi Arabia visiting the Cleveland Clinic for heart surgery. Back then, the United States was the premiere place to come for medical treatment, because our technology was clearly the best.

Today, most of the world has access to the same health care technology that we have. We're still the most expensive, but we have nothing special in terms of quality. So maybe it's time for us to work on affordability.