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### **[Medical Tourism Experts Health Options Worldwide \(www.healthoptionsworldwide.com\)](http://www.healthoptionsworldwide.com) [Discuss the Safety Benefits of Domestic Medical Travel](#)**

PRINCETON, NJ--(Marketwire - December 16, 2010) - [Medical tourism](#) continues to grow at a frantic pace, at a rate of 20-30% per year with no slowdown in sight. Currently estimated to be at \$78.5 billion, the market is huge, serving over three million patients who travel internationally for medical care. It is growing so quickly that the business research and consulting firm Frost and Sullivan predicts it will be a \$100 billion market by 2012. With so many patients looking for low cost, high quality medical treatments outside of their own country, [medical tourism experts](#) Health Options Worldwide (HOW) tackles the question of how safe American patients are in the international [medical travel](#) market.

"The focal point of patient safety is on the hospital or healthcare provider that is administering the treatment," said David Goldstein, president of HOW, an online [medical travel agency](#). So how can patients be sure that the healthcare provider they have selected has the necessary experience and credentials to handle their treatment? Will their treatment be effective? What if problems arise? These questions are difficult to answer if the care is being sought after in another country, but can be very well managed right here in the United States. "The problem is getting patients to stay here for quality medical care instead of seeking lower priced, yet unproven, care internationally," explained Goldstein.

To assure themselves of proven treatments, patients can review qualifications, accreditations and experience from their own research or the HOW website, which provides this valuable information to the [medical traveler](#). Healthcare providers and medical tourism facilitators can provide research, information and even data on clinical outcomes to reassure the patient of their healthcare choices. "This information is far more difficult to obtain from foreign countries due to information and language constraints," explained Goldstein. All too often, patients are asked to blindly trust the claims of the international healthcare provider, especially in countries that do not have national standards and information collection systems for clinical outcome data, independent review and analysis. "Even the JCI (Joint Commission International) accreditation is not a guarantee of quality or standard for safe and successful treatments," said Goldstein.

"The only 'blind' risk a potential medical tourism patient might consider taking would be to travel for a treatment that is not yet approved in their own country, such as liberation therapy for multiple sclerosis," said Goldstein. "It's tempting but definitely risky to not only undergo an unapproved treatment, let alone one that is done outside of this country."

A 2008 McKinsey and Company report found 40% of medical travelers wanted advanced technology, 32% wanted better healthcare, 15% wanted faster medical services and only 9% of travelers wanted lower costs. "The United States healthcare market can capitalize on all of these factors and keep medical travelers from going overseas," said Goldstein. "It's all about devoting the time and resources in promoting the benefits offered right here at home."