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Global medical tourism is failing to deliver quality care to international travelers, Medical Travel Quality Alliance President Julie Munro tells Dubai gathering.

December 4, 2015 – Dubai – The medical tourism industry has failed to live up to its promise of better quality treatment and care for patients seeking to travel to a foreign country for health care, Julie Munro, president of Medical Travel Quality Alliance (MTQUA, www.mtqua.org), told an audience of 500 at Gulf Medical University (GMU) last week.

“Medical tourism is at a crossroads,” said Munro. “Because the industry has paid too much attention to the “tourism” part and not enough to the “medical” part, medical travelers have mostly been left without the guidance or information they need in order to get the best results possible.”



Julie Munro, MTQUA president, addresses Gulf Medical University medical tourism event in Dubai.

Dubai Healthcare Authority, as a recent entrant to the industry, has the opportunity to create a support structure that is more patient-focused, she said. Its new complications insurance product is a good example of government commitment to better outcomes and care for medical tourists.

The new program of instruction in medical tourism at Gulf Medical University will also help steer the industry toward higher standards in quality and support for medical tourists.

“Three UAE hospitals have shown they are committed to quality in patient care and support and have received MTQUA medical tourism certification,” said Munro.

These hospitals, Saudi German Hospital Dubai, Al Zahra Hospital, and Thumbay Hospital Ajman have met the international standard of excellence for care and services to international patients and medical travelers. Other hospitals, clinics and medical travel facilitators in the UAE are presently going through the certification process. MTQUA-certified facilities and agencies are in 16 countries.

“We believe that the risk for medical tourists has become unacceptable, making it necessary for us to issue our first medical travel advisory,” said Munro, speaking at the 2nd Annual Conference on Destination UAE Health and Medical Tourism Hub.

This medical travel advisory, the first ever issued by a major medical tourism industry group, warns medical tourists about dangerous conditions in the Dominican Republic. In addition, MTQUA puts four countries, Mexico, Thailand, India and South Korea on a medical tourism “watch” list due to higher risks to medical traveler safety and quality.

Medical Travel Quality Alliance (MTQUA, <http://mtqua.org>), founded in 2009, is an independent international organization that develops and promotes the highest standards of excellence in delivering treatment and care to medical travelers and health tourists. It certifies hospitals, clinics, medical travel facilitators and service providers worldwide for safety and quality in support of treatment, care and services for medical tourists; issues the Top 10 World's Best Hospitals for Medical Tourists™ annually; and authenticates online testimonials.

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