4

Building Trust and Credibility:

Website and Internet Best Practices in Medical Tourism

25 **proven tools, tactics and practices
to make your services
MORE TRUSTED
by medical tourists and international patients**

Julie W. Munro
Caroline Bodanis
Ana Marica

Medical Tourism Certification

Workshops, Seminars, Training

Medical Tourism Degree and Diploma Curriculum

World's Best Hospitals
for Medical Tourists

Medical Travel
Alerts and Warnings

Verified Endorsements

International Patient Registry

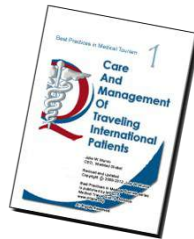Best Practices in Medical Tourism

Inside Medical Travel
Newsletter

Read These Best Practices in Medical Tourism Publications

This publication, Medical Tourism Website and Internet Best Practices, is the fourth volume in the MTQUA series of Best Practices in Medical Tourism.

MTQUA welcomes submissions from experienced health care and medical tourism professionals for publication in this series.

If you have a best practice submission, please inquire to caroline@mtqua.org.

Best Practices in Medical Tourism #1

**Care And Management
Of Traveling International Patients**

by Julie W. Munro

Download now

Best Practices in Medical Tourism #2

**GREAT EVERY TIME:
Delivering Excellent Patient
Experience By Managing Critical
Touchpoints In Medical Tourism**

Download now

by Sandra J. Millar and Julie W. Munro

Best Practices in Medical Tourism #3

WHAT IS MEDICAL TOURISM?

by Julie W. Munro

Download now

Contents

Ω

A. The Most Important Selling Tools

When medical tourists visit your website, what do they find?

Do medical tourists see pages that look like those of your competitor down the road or in another country?

Do they believe the information you are giving them?

Are they building enough confidence in your brand that they will trust you with their personal information or give you their money?

Ω

Best practice guidelines improve the quality of your medical tourism website or web pages.

This best practices publication presents guidelines for improving the nature and the quality of websites that promote medical tourism services to health care consumers.

Many of these guidelines, while useful for websites in general, have been written to present best practices for medical tourism websites.

Guidelines presented here follow standards for privacy, disclosure, patient services, online activities and other areas of MTQUA medical tourism certification.

A website reflects your brand.

Your business needs a website. For medical tourism businesses, the website will be exclusively devoted to describing and promoting your medical tourism services.

For all others – hospitals, clinics, etc. that have wider audiences – the website must have a separate section exclusively for medical tourists and international patients.

Visitors and potential clients have questions that your medical tourism website or web pages need to answer.

- Who are you?

- What do you offer?

- What can I find here that I won't find elsewhere?

- What kind of care will you give me?

- Will you treat me with appropriate care and consideration if I give you my business?

- How and when can I reach you?

- Can I believe you? Can I trust you?

Best practices for medical tourism websites

One can find many sources on the internet that inform about best practices for websites, and some describe best practices specifically for health care websites.

But this paper is the only source of information that will help you build and manage a website, or web pages, dedicated to medical tourists.

This Best Practice Volume 4 will show you how you can make your website *the* one that medical tourists can trust and depend on for the information they need in order to make good choices about the medical or health care they want to get in a foreign country.

This paper is not about marketing your business on the internet. You won't find information on SEO, Facebook advertising or Google analytics.

Instead, you will learn what you need to do to make your website – the voice and the personality of your business – ready for your marketing team and outside experts in SEO, analytics and social media to do their jobs.

If marketing is the "icing" on a cake, this paper offers you the recipe to make a very good cake ready to be iced.

The first impression is the lasting impression.

People seeking information on the internet visit an average of eight websites to find what they are looking for. It used to be four or five.

A typical new visitor to your website decides whether to stay or leave your website within the first 15 seconds.
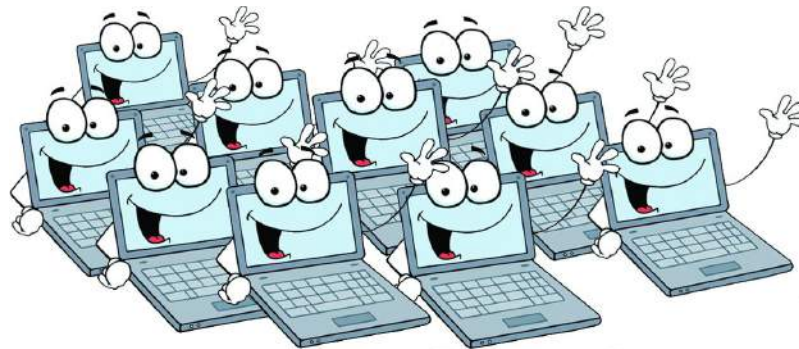
In those 15 seconds, your website needs to instill a sense of identity, credibility, confidence and trust. Your website needs to maintain that sense of identity, credibility, confidence and trust in your organization for all the time a visitor stays on your site.

Is your medical tourism website or the web pages the one out of eight sites that visitors stop at, or is it one of the seven other sites they quickly skip over?

The Internet is the key driver of your medical tourism business.

Your medical tourism business stands on the shoulders of the internet. Without the internet providing the means cheaply and universally to promote medical travel across borders, between countries and around the world, the medical tourism industry would not be where it is today.

Health care consumers would be unaware of the global choices available to them, hospitals would not have large international patient practices, doctors would not be searching far and wide away from home for new places where they can use their professional skills, and medical tourism facilitators, agents, and brokers would likely be few and far between.

If your website doesn't provide a helpful, informative and visually appealing experience to site visitors, yours will be one of the 7 other sites that people pass over.

59% of all American adults have looked online for disease or treatment information .

What are health care consumers looking for?

Though the internet is so important to the medical tourism industry, and websites nearly always drive the business of a medical tourism program, few websites give medical tourists what they are looking for in the most effective and informative possible way.

We put up websites so that consumers and medical tourists can find our services. What do we know about the services consumers look for, where they look for them and what else they search for?

- Three-quarters of U.S. adults (74%) use the internet and, of those, many participate in an online conversation about health, according to a recent study by the highly respected Pew Research organization.

- 80% of internet users in the U.S. have looked online for information about any one of 15 health topics such as a specific disease or treatment.

- 34% of internet users have read someone else's commentary or experience about health or medical issues on an online news group, website, or blog.

25% of internet users have watched an online video about health or medical issues.

- 14% of internet users have signed up to receive email updates or alerts about health or medical issues.

- 6% of internet users have posted comments, questions or information about health or medical issues on a website of some kind, such as a health site or news site that allows comments and discussion.

- 4% of internet users have posted such comments, questions or information on a blog.

- 16% of internet users have consulted online rankings or reviews of doctors or other providers.

- 15% of internet users have consulted online rankings or reviews of hospitals or other medical facilities.

- 4% of internet users have posted a review online of a doctor

- 3% of internet users have posted a review online of a hospital.

Ω

In a 2012 PricewaterhouseCoopers study of the use of social media by American consumers, one-third of consumers use sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and online forums to find health-related information, track symptoms and broadcast their thoughts about doctors, drugs, treatments, medical and health plans.

- 42 percent of consumers have used social media to access reviews of treatments or physicians.

- 25 percent have posted about their health experience.

- More than 75 percent of consumers surveyed would expect healthcare companies to respond within 24 hours or fewer to requests for appointments via social media. And nearly half are more demanding, expecting a response within a few hours.

-

5% of internet users have posted health-related comments, questions, or information in an online discussion, a listserv, or other online group forum.

Consumers ar e also using social media to make decisions about seeking care.

- 45 percent saying that information found via social media would have an impact on their decisions to get a second opinion.

- 41 percent of consumers said social media tools influence their choice of a specific hospital, medical facility or doctor.

- 45 percent said the internet would affect their decision to get a second opinion.

- 34 percent said the internet would influence their decision about taking a certain medication.

Ω

Industry websites are failing to help medical tourists and international patients make good choices.

Consumers visit your site for information they can use in planning a medical trip:

- What insurance will be accepted?

- What forms will they need?

- Which floor is the lab on?

- Can they get a certain procedure at your facility or through your service?

- How do they reach their specialist by phone?

- How much will it cost? etc.

There are many factors involved at this stage that are not being communicated well to the patient and often these vital touch points are overlooked yet they are often significant factors in helping potential patients make purchasing decisions. These include:

- What are the details of treatment

- How long they need to stay in the hospital

- Where will they stay after they leave the hospital

- How much recuperation time they need before they return home

- What kind of accommodation is available to their traveling companions

- Do staff speak English or your native language

- What is the food like

- And much more …

Ω

What they typically find instead is an abundance of hospital- or practice-centric 'About Us' content. While it is fine to provide an overview of the organization as a local patient care or service provider, you are not giving people what they want.

"Today, the range of information on these websites is huge, from very good information to that which isn't very relevant," comments Jane Webster, senior vice president of research and development for URAC, a well-known leader in promoting healthcare quality, in the article "It's Judgment Day for Hospital Websites."

Medical tourists get too much marketing and not enough information.

Rather than conveying useful information, Webster adds, the material related to medical tourism on hospital websites "is more of a marketing message and lacks information to substantiate the claims they're making.

Hospitals really need to move the bar up, put more facts behind the statements they're making," she says.

Another study of medical tourism websites shows that web-based medical tourism information suffers from these features

- Poor quality of information

- Inconsistency in the kinds of information offered

- Lack of ethical concerns

- Absence of safety, quality and confidentiality controls

- Omission of important facts

- Doubtful accuracy and honesty

Ω

These are the conclusions of Suchitra Wagle, a research scholar at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, who analyzed the websites of more than 200 medical tourism facilitators, agents and brokers and published the results recently in the Indian Journal of Medical Ethics, Web-Based Medical Facilitators in Medical Tourism: The Third Party in Decision-Making .

Wagle points out that while the quality of all online information varies widely, it is particularly the case with medical tourism websites.

Is it possible for medical tourists to make good decisions?

Hospital and medical tourism company websites are an essential component of the medical tourism industry.

- These websites have emerged as the most common sources of information that influence a patient's choice of destination country and providers of treatment and services.
- These websites connect hospitals and physicians to patients across the world.
- They are networking tools that provide particular hospitals or physicians with a much wider platform and can promote them across the globe.

34% of internet users have read someone else's commentary or experience about health or medical issues on an online blog, website, or news group.

Are today's medical tourism websites good enough for patients to make informed decisions?

Today, the range of information on these websites is huge, from very good information to that which is not very relevant. Rather than conveying useful information, the material on both hospital and medical travel services websites is more of a marketing message and lacks information to substantiate the claims they make.

In the article, The Ethics of Medical Tourism Company Websites Katherine Wertz and Magdalena Berry write:

Medical tourism companies may feel the urge to draw in as many customers as possible, sometimes blurring the line between patient safety and profit... They downplay (risk) significantly in favor of highlighting the positive aspects of their business in order to attract and maintain clients... (This) impairs patients' ability to make informed health decision, therefore calling into question the ethics of the websites and the companies themselves.

Poor information on websites creates false trust.

In medical tourism, the internet allows unqualified personnel easy entry into the health services trade. An absence of conventional doctor-patient relationships creates quasi-professional relationships between prospective patients and intermediaries such as medical travel agents, facilitators, or other non-medical personnel.

The natural inclination of consumers in this quasi-professional relationship is to have confidence enough to trust the intermediaries and their information.

Control quality of information through certification.

By certification, we don't mean certification that is granted via online courses or weekend workshops.

Whereas doctors are governed by a code of conduct, intermediaries working in medical tourism, from hospital international patient coordinators to facilitators and brokers are not subject to any ethical or practical constraints. The hospitals and companies they work for are similarly not subject to "truth in practice" or "do no harm" checks or controls.

- **Who are you?**
- **What do you offer that I can't do for myself?**
- **How can I reach you?**
- **What do I get for my money?**

Medical Tourism Certification from the Medical Travel Quality Alliance provides one control over quality of information and confidentiality of private data. Intermediaries and providers that become medical tourism certified by MTQUA are required to put into operation a code of conduct and other safety, confidentiality and privacy protections for medical tourists.

MTQUA certification reviews an organization's business practices, care management protocols, communication and correspondence practices, cultural and social service as well as requiring they take steps to raise the quality of their websites with regard to the information they present and the methods by which they manage private data.

Ω

Your website is your identity. Do visitors believe you? Do they have confidence in you? Can they trust you?

In medical tourism, more than in any other area of health care, your website is your business. It IS your brand – even more reason to make your website stand out from your competitors. Make it a well-designed and technically functional website that displays both internet best practices and medical tourism best practices.

Social media marketing, Google Ad Words, analytics, etc. are areas for which one should use technical experts. When you feel your business or your services are ready to take advantage of such more advanced marketing and internet tools, it is time to call internet marketing experts.

The best practices that follow cover only the most important elements of identity, establishing credibility, building confidence and moving toward trust. For a comprehensive review of the requirements that all medical tourism websites should have, along with a few of the advanced features for sites with more complex marketing requirements, see the MTQUA e-book **Best Practices for Health Care Websites and Internet Services** to be published in early 2016.

Ω

B. Trust And Credibility

A key question when an online user first comes to your website is "Who are you?"

You must answer quickly and clearly. Then when users ask "What do you do?" and "Why should I trust you?" you must make it easy for them to find the answers.

Trust and credibility sell.

The challenge for you is how to achieve trust and credibility for your company, clinic, or hospital through your website.

How do you instill confidence about your services in the clients who are interested in making a purchase?

You cannot just snap your fingers and instantly achieve trust and credibility.

A business or practice achieves trust by being credible and instilling confidence in its clients. It does so in two ways, by building a solid reputation over time and by validating its practices, procedures, and claims through recognized third party authorities.

The purpose of your website is not to sell trust and credibility to visitors. Your website is there to reflect and amplify the credibility that your business or service has. This creates confidence in your business, and this in turn opens the door to trust.

Many of us recognize the image of a strong padlock in a website address bar. It signifies trust and promises that others won't be able to steal or share our personal or financial information when we conduct a transaction on this page. The padlock is a "trust seal."

This paper does not make any statement about the quality of services or products a company or hospital is offering. It makes no declaration about a company's or a clinic's business practices. It makes no guarantee that testimonials or references are truthful.

This is what best practices and trust seals do.

Testimonials from former patients or clients, support from senior doctors or established professional figures, or attributions or mentions in major media outlets do the same job for a website as word-of-mouth does for a traditional offline business.

1. "About Us" page

Your 'About Us' page should explain what you do in words and phrases common to the kind of site visitors you get, not in industry jargon that is almost impossible for a new visitor to understand.

2. Trust seals

All trust seals or endorsements should be displayed prominently on your site. Consider these four types of trust seals:

For the usual personal information like email address or credit card and payment details, see companies like VeriSign, etc.

For medical tourism related services, MTQUA Medical Tourism Certification includes verification of personal information as well as medical tourism processes and operations.

For health information that is sourced appropriately and ethically, Health on the Net Foundation.

For trusted testimonials, MTQUA supports "Verified Endorsement" authentication of testimonials and case studies on the internet.

3. Certification

Medical tourism certification from MTQUA is your independent third party recognition that the non-medical services of your hospital, clinic or business meet a set of international standards of excellence for care and services to international patients and medical tourists.

This should not be confused with hospital accreditation (which is a clinical review against a set of clinical standards) or certificate-granting workshops and training.

4. Email address

No one should be using an email address from an email service like gmail, yahoo, hotmail, aol, etc. Likewise, no one should be using an email address using "info@" or similar names when replying to direct patient or consumer queries.

Use your website domain name extention as your email address. If not, your host service provider will set you up with your own email account for free or for a few dollars a year.

5. Code of conduct

A code of conduct contributes to "trust" only to the extent that the company itself is willing to abide by it. Because a code of conduct is self-monitoring, it is not as strong a mark of "trust" as earned proof of conduct such as obtained through certification.

6. Testimonials

Testimonials are often where the real indication of a company's quality is revealed – non-paid customer testimonials. These can be references from previous clients; reviews from satisfied patients or even ratings for your products and services.

Most of all, testimonials that you use on your website must be authentic, with real photographs if used. Do not use a person's

name, photo or other identifying information without explicit written permission.

When you read website testimonials on other sites, do you sometimes wonder if real customers wrote them? How can you be sure that the website owner hasn't just made them up?
A company can hire writers, actors and video production companies to create false testimonials. This is called "opinion spam" and its practice is exploding.

You can prove that the testimonials and reviews on your website are accurate and true by having them authenticated by a recognized independent third party.

MTQUA Verified Endorsements
Unless you can back up what you are saying, why would anyone take you seriously?

7. Expert reviews and consumer ratings

Reviews can be a great way to attract new users and increase conversion. Show caution before subscribing to online rating systems, as they are controversial in health care.

8. Proof of claims

Always prove your claims about any product or service. Your visitors do not have to believe something just because you say it – and probably will not.

Too often on medical tourism websites, claims of "world class" service or treatment, "state-of-the-art" equipment, "exceptional"

Ω

doctors, or cost at "a fraction of the price" are made without proof or evidence of the claim.

Instead, give visitors to your website facts, samples, videos and demos. Show charts, endorsements, etc. If you cannot back it up, they will not believe you.

Lots of superlatives = Little credibility
Limited use of superlatives = High credibility

Ω

C. Security, Privacy And Safety

Online security and privacy are especially critical issues in medical tourism.

Most visitors to your website will assume that you treat the information they provide as confidential.

However, this is not the practice across the board with most medical providers or medical tourism services.

Confidentiality of all correspondence and communication of a personal or financial nature – medical history, medical records, payment transactions, medical condition and needs – is essential to make your visitor feel confident enough to reveal the information you require to complete a transaction.

Let visitors know you value and respect their privacy in an explicit statement on your website.

If you do, or want to do, business with American doctors, medical professionals, or hospitals, you **must** become HIPAA compliant.

9. Secure transmission and collection of information: "https"

Electronic data security is of paramount concern in a site visitor's mind and should be standard operating procedure for all medical tourism providers.

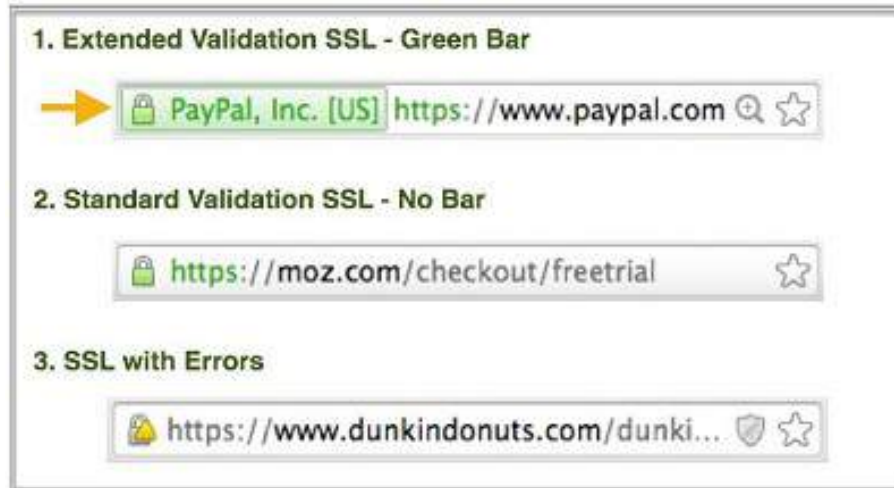There are three ways supported by MTQUA to transmit information securely.

First, any page on your website with a form that collects or displays protected health information, or which is used for logging users in, which transmits authorization cookies, etc., must be protected by SSL and must not be accessible insecurely (i.e. there should *not* be an alternate insecure version of the same page that people can access).

The best way is to provide SSL (secure socket layer) encrypted security for entering and sending this type of information. SSL security may be placed on specific pages or on the full site. Placed on the full site will probably affect search results – do this with the help of an experienced web security or SEO professional.

A page has SSL security if the URL starts with **https://...**

Depending on the type of SSL you have, the address bar will show a "lock" icon. There are several types of SSL certificates, but the most common are Extended and Standard.

The green bar associated with extended certificates communicates the most trust. When your SSL page shows an error, visitors may not trust the security provided.

1. Extended Validation SSL - Green Bar

🔒 PayPal, Inc. [US] https://www.paypal.com 🔍 ☆

2. Standard Validation SSL - No Bar

🔒 https://moz.com/checkout/freetrial ☆

3. SSL with Errors

⚠️ https://www.dunkindonuts.com/dunki... 🛡 ☆

The same level of security needs to be provided when any outside company or service is used, such as remote medical records transfer, dissemination of pre-surgery instructions, translations, referral or introduction to other medical professionals or providers (hospitals, clinics, etc.), agents or the patients themselves.

This may be done by creating a form that includes download and/or upload capability on your secure website or uses a secure cloud-based service.

SSL certificates need not be expensive. SSLMate provides free certificates at https://sslmate.com/ .

10. Secure transmission and collection of information: "secure cloud-based service"

The second way to ensure security of transmission of data is to create an account with a secure cloud-based service that specializes in transferring of health care records. You can opt for a full service paid account with companies such as box.com or a secure email transmission service with the company such as pdffiller.com   Both of these are paid services.

11. Secure transmission, replies and controls: "Virtru"

The third way is to open up a free account at virtru.com which is perhaps the best and easiest way for both you and your clients to keep information secure.

12. "Old school" secure transmission

A final way to provide secure transmission with your client or third party is through a virtual facsimile transmission such as http://www.interfax.net/. Faxes are an accepted method by which to send secure data.

13. Privacy policy: use of technology

Ensuring the privacy of your clients and protecting the information they submit is especially important.

Health-related websites including medical tourism websites and international patient sections of hospital websites must address three kinds of privacy issues.

First is the standard acknowledgement about how you use the technology of the web to protect the privacy of the website visitor. This includes use of cookies, gathering of location data, email addresses, usage, etc.

A policy about the gathering of information is usually found on the "Terms of use" page.

14. Privacy policy: protecting financial information

Second is the protection of financial information, that is any data related to financial transactions including credit card data, social security or national ID numbers, street address, billing address, etc. A privacy policy must describe how you keep this information private.

Ω

15. Privacy policy: protecting personal health information

Third, and most important, is the protection of personal health information. This may include even the very first contact made by the visitor. For example, if a visitor fills in a "Contact Us" form and includes an email address (or other identifier) along with a statement such as "I want to have breast augmentation next month" this probably should be considered private personal health data.

16. Contact us

Visitors want to know they can get in touch with you if they need.

Displaying a physical address has been shown to boosts visitor confidence and lead to more commitment from visitors. Many websites neglect to display a physical addresses or phone number.

WHAT DOES GOOGLE SAY?

✔ DO...

Update old content that has become outdated.

List your contact information (name of business, full address, phone number, etc.) as text, not in an image so that search engines, including local searches, can pick it up.

Make it clear that inquiries regarding a medical situation (as most will be) should use the secure form (found on an SSL-type "https://" page) and not the standard contact form.

Ω

D. Usage Policies

Usage policies are for your protection and for the protection of your client or patient.

Stating these clearly and transparently helps make your position clear and lets visitors know exactly where they stand.

17. Copyright

It is important to have a current and up-to-date copyright statement page on your website. Update your copyright statements every year so your visitors know that the site is being updated and monitored on a regular basis. Make sure your copyright clause is in the internationally accepted format:

Copyright © YYYY *Legal name of business holding copyright*

18. Terms of use

Be sure to model your "Terms of use" correctly and appropriately for your type of business and the country in which your business is registered. When looking for a model, check other hospital websites or established health care related sites.

19. Medical disclaimer

Don't confuse general disclaimers such as described in the "Terms of Use" (see above), with medical disclaimers.

Just as you are, or should be, careful about the sort of health- or treatment-related information you describe on the pages of your website, you must also clearly show a disclaimer regarding the limitations of all health-related advice and description of services presented on your website so that visitors are not confused regarding the nature of your business.

You can find many models of health-related disclaimers on the web.

E. HIPAA Compliance

HIPAA stands for *The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996*, which is a U.S. law that requires all medical providers – and those who work with medical providers – to protect the privacy of the health data and related information of any patient or client.

How important is this for you?

In this publication, we address only those aspects of HIPAA compliance related to internet and website practices.

Securely sharing patient records online, having secure messaging between patients or clients and doctors on the website, and storing all of this information are three

critical activities that occur with nearly every medical tourist transaction.

- Does your website collect information from prospective **patients from anywhere in the world** who are inquiring about services, for example with an online contact form?

- Do you share information online including some aspect of patient records, or appointments with patients, doctors, or other third parties?

- Do you email private client or patient information over an unencrypted network, or to insecure email accounts like Gmail or yahoo?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, you need to pay attention to this section.

You need to know what to do in order to safeguard client and patient health information so that you meet HIPAA requirements.

In America, failure to comply with HIPAA requirements is punishable in a court of justice. Most hospitals and doctors in the U.S. will not do business with you if there is any doubt that you are not in compliance with HIPAA. Few health care professionals will put their careers in jeopardy in order to do business with unknown foreign agents.

In Europe, privacy laws similar to HIPAA are in force. HIPAA requirements can serve as guidelines for ensuring client/patient privacy in health-related matters. By following these guidelines, you will meet most, if not all, legal requirements in other countries.

Please review the U.S. [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Acto of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy, Security and Breach Notification Rules.](#)

20. HIPAA requirements for a website

Aside from the issues of secure transmission described in the previous section, the following is a summary of HIPAA requirements for a website as they may affect a medical tourism service provider.

If you often engage with U.S. providers or patients, it is prudent to review your practices with an expert.

While it is up to you to decide what level of HIPAA protection you need to offer to patients or clients, the following should become standard practice for all in medical tourism.

None is difficult to do. Just tell the web folks what you need. It will be up to your web site designers to set up properly for you.

21. Encryption

No private information should be emailed over an unencrypted network or to insecure email accounts, period. This means that the email protocol must be something like SMTP at a minimum. Your staff, doctors and clients need to know this. See **Transmission and Collection of Information** above.

WHAT DOES GOOGLE SAY?

✔ DO...

Make sure your content is written by experts.

Do not develop any function on the website that allows patient information to be emailed to an insecure account or to be stored online in form fillers or cookies.

22. Email correspondence

Ordinary email is not private. Anyone with even a little technical experience can intercept your email messages and read everything you send (including your attachments). To use email and still be HIPAA-compliant, you must use some form of encryption.

Medical tourism agents or employees of small medical or dental clinics often work from home or while they are traveling. They log into their web-based email or they use gmail, yahoo, etc. for part of their client or patient communication. This is not secure email.

Consider using a portable email program that resides on a USB stick or other portable device. Mozilla Thunderbird Portable Edition or the portable edition of TrulyMail. Both are free downloads that leave no personal information behind on guest machines. TrulyMail also gives you encrypted email.

Cosider using Virtru.com (see section C.11).

A telephone call is considered more secure than ordinary email. However, you will have no paper trail to document important facts or decisions.

23. Email correspondence disclaimer

A disclaimer on all your email correspondence related to an individual's plan or treatment is a good practice. Here are some disclaimers from which you can create your own.

> **CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE:** This e-mail message, including any attachments of any type are covered by the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, is confidential and may include legally protected information.
>
> If you are not the intended recipient or you have received this e-mail message by mistake, printing, copying, storing or disseminating in any way is prohibited and doing so can subject you to civil and or criminal action. Please notify the

sender you have received this e-mail by mistake and delete all information contained in and attached to this email.

DISCLAIMER: Information transmitted by this e-mail is intended for use only by the individual or entity to which it is addressed, and may contain confidential or legally privileged information.

If you are not the intended recipient or it appears that this mail has been forwarded to you without proper authority, you are not authorized to access, read, disclose, copy, use or otherwise deal with it and any such actions are prohibited and may be unlawful. Internet communications cannot be guaranteed to be secure or error-free as information could be intercepted, corrupted, lost, arrive late or contain viruses.

(This company) therefore does not accept liability for any errors, omissions, viruses or computer problems experienced as a result of this transmission.

If you have received this e-mail in error, please notify us immediately to (company email address) and delete this mail from your records. Notice is hereby given that no representation, contract or other binding obligation shall be created by this e-mail.

24. Authorization

If your site collects health information and sends it to you or others, it is important to know who can access those messages. Who has access to your email or the messaging system? Are they all trusted?

If your web site stores or provides access to patient health information, do you enforce unique, secure logins, which ensure that only authorized/appropriate people can access that data? Are these logins and the data accesses audited?

25. Storage and disposal

The database where the patient information is stored must be secure and encrypted. You must be sure that all protected information stored with your web site or collected from your web site is backed up and can be recovered in case of an emergency or accidental deletion. Most web hosts provide this service for information stored on their servers.

Consider *all* of the places where a client's data is stored and may be backed up and archived. You need to ensure that all of those backups will expire and disappear. Otherwise, every location that the information touches could be making backups and be saving copies of your data … indefinitely.

BONUS TIP!

26. Video transmission and video conferencing

As video conferencing and tele-medicine become more highly used in medical tourism, providers and patients need to be aware that there is no method to date by which a video transmission is secure or confidential. Use video conferencing wisely.

About the Authors

Julie W. Munro

Julie W. Munro is one of the pioneers of medical tourism. She is president of the Medical Travel Quality Alliance (MTQUA http://www.mtqua.org), which she founded in 2009 to promote safer and better care management throughout the industry, yielding better outcomes for medical tourists.

She has been a leader in medical tourism for more than a decade. She founded her medical concierge business, Cosmetic Surgery Travel, in 2003.The company and clients have been featured in television and print reports in the U.S. including Fox News, ABC Television, NBC, Washington Post, Fodor's Travel Guides and others.

As a business consultant to the medical travel industry, Munro offers clients her experience as a successful facilitator for thousands of patients, her marketing acumen in promoting health care and related services for medical tourists, and her extensive worldwide network of medical tourism "practitioners" including business experts, health care professionals and clinical specialists from established and emerging traditional and alternative medical and health-related fields.

Caroline Bodanis

Caroline Bodanis is Director of Member Services at the Medical Travel Quality Alliance. She manages the MTQUA website, newsletter and publications. She has conducted direct mail marketing and email marketing campaigns for more than 25 years.

Ana Marica

Ana Marica is a U.K.-based research scholar and translator.

Additional source material used for this publication, *Internet Best Practices For Medical Tourism Companies and Health Care Providers,* includes Jakob Neilsen, Health on the Net Foundation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Healthcare Success, Web Marketing Association, Adestra, PriceWaterhouse Coopers, Pew Research and others.

## *About Medical Travel Quality Alliance*

Medical Travel Quality Alliance (MTQUA, http://mtqua.org) is an independent international organization founded in 2009 to promote improvement in quality outcomes and care management for international patients and medical travelers around the world.

MTQUA products and services benefit and support all consumers and providers. Through Medical Tourism Certification, Best Practices in Medical Tourism and other programs:

- We assist and support consumers who are seeking quality health services as medical tourists.

- We support hospitals, clinics, doctor groups, alternative treatment centers, health and wellness assistance agencies and facilitators, recovery resorts and related businesses around the world in promoting and providing better quality services to medical tourists.

- We assist local, national and regional and non-government agencies to create responsible medical tourism programs for their economic and development goals and inbound patient needs.

- We help public health care agencies to find the right medical tourism providers and services for their health care budgets and outbound patient needs.

MTQUA has offices in USA, Canada and Thailand. Contact MTQUA via its website at http://www.mtqua.org or by email to RN@mtqua.org

Ω
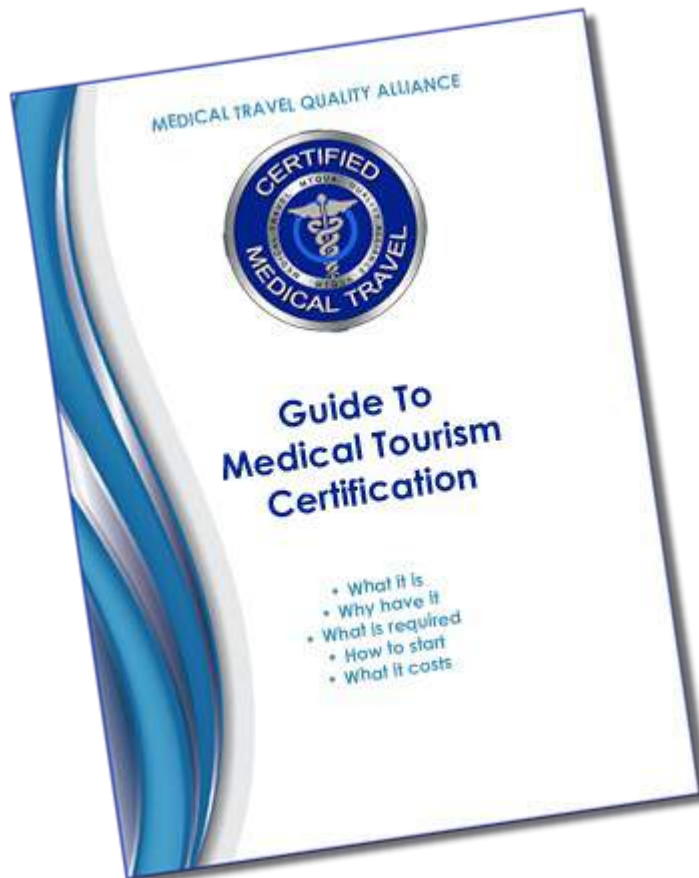
DOWNLOAD

this guide
for
information
about
Medical
Tourism
Certification.

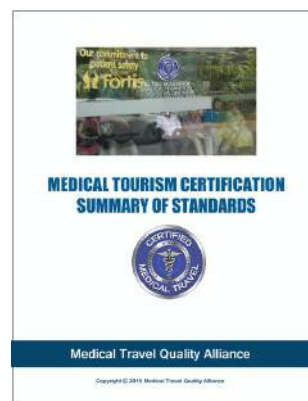http://www.mtqua.org/medical-tourism-certification/

Medical Tourism Certification

Medical tourism certification from MTQUA is available for hospitals, clinics, medical tourism facilitators and agents, specialty treatment centers, wellness spas, resorts, hotels and any organization that provides support services to medical tourists and international patients. More information is available on the MTQUA website at http://www.mtqua.org/medical-tourism-certification/

Becoming certified requires that the organization or business meets specific international best practice standards covering:

- Privacy, security, safety for medical travelers
- Care management processes and protocols
- Marketing and communications
- Transparency of business and health practices
- Patient experience
- Social and cultural customs and environments
- Internet and website practices
- Professional practices
- Business services and operations for medical travelers
- And more ...

Ω

MTQUA Products and Services

Medical Tourism Certification   MTQUA offers the only cross-services medical tourism certification for hospitals, clinics, agencies, specialty treatment centers, resorts, etc., including training and workshops to support and enhance certification standards and protocols.

MTQUA Medical travel and health tourism curriculum is featured as core learning modules at selected universities and colleges around the world.

World's Best Hospitals for Medical Tourists™   MTQUA annually publishes a list of best hospitals for medical travelers, based on quality medical treatment, patient care and medical travel best practice.

Medical Travel Advisory™   MTQUA monitors quality and safety conditions for medical tourists and issues warnings and watches as needed to alert medical tourists to potentially higher risks in certain situations.

MTQUA Verified Endorsement   MTQUA verifies accuracy of testimonials and other "social proofs" for health care websites.

Best Practices In Medical Tourism   Best practices demonstrate how to produce results better than those achieved by other means, and are used as a benchmark against which to judge one's own practices and to improve those practices.

Medical Travel Patient Registry™   Medical tourists may use the MTQUA network to monitor their medical travel plans and patient journey from start to finish.

Inside Medical Travel Newsletter   Subscribe to the MTQUA newsletter for useful tools, information and insights to help you grow your medical tourism business.

http://www.mtqua.org

MTQUA.ORG