Press Release

Medical tourism is showing a steady growth in India

Lower cost of treatment, government policies to make conditions conducive for tourists, form some of the reasons for this growth

New Delhi, 2017: Medical tourism is seeing a steady growth in the country as per recent statistics. What currently stands at 3 billion dollars is expected to grow to about 7 to 8 billion dollars by the year 2020. India issued more than 1.78 lakh medical visas in the year 2016. As per the IMA, some of the major reasons for this increase in medical tourism in the country include the presence of world-class hospitals and skilled medical professionals. Apart from this, the cost of treatment for various major surgeries in India is only a fraction or even as low as 10% of that in many developed countries.

Medical tourism is the process of traveling outside the country of residence for receiving medical care. This originally referred to the travel of patients from less-developed countries to developed nations in pursuit of the treatments not available in their homeland. Another major reason for the rise in medical tourism in India is the availability of alternative treatment options such as Ayurveda and Naturopathy.

Speaking about this, Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement, said, “Medical tourism has been a major growth sector globally. The exorbitant healthcare costs in the affluent Western countries have made healthcare out of reach for even their citizens. Consequently, they are now looking beyond their borders to seek medical treatment. India has emerged as a prime destination in the last few years for people across the globe in need of medical treatment. Affordability, high quality healthcare, availability of specialist treatment and advanced technologies are just a few reasons that have made India a much sought-after destination. Furthermore, the diversity of its flora and fauna, its natural beauty including a rich and vibrant cultural heritage has already put India on the tourist map. Many facilities in India have become a destination for learning and healing together. One can opt for a complete body detox using Yoga techniques and learn them too.”
India now has a simplified e-medical visa facility which allows three visits to the country. The government is also taking steps to address other areas such as standardization and accreditation of services.

Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, “Tourism also contributes a fair share to the economy of a country. Therefore, the government has important roles to play in the development and refinement of medical tourism in India, not only as a regulator but also as a facilitator. In view of this, the government of India has constituted a Medical and Wellness Tourism Board as a dedicated institution to guide the promotion and positioning of India as a competent and credible medical and wellness tourism destination.”

IMA is a member of National Medical and Wellness Tourism Board. The following recommendations are likely to be implemented.

- Government to facilitate e-Medical Visa.
- Normally e-Visa given for 60 days but e-Medical Visa will be for 6 months.
- e-Visa will have a permission for double entry, but e-Medical Visa will permit Triple entry.
- e-Visa will be extendable to e-Medical Visa.
- e-Medical Visa will be available at five major Indian Ports i.e. Mumbai, Cochin, Goa, Chennai and Mangalore.
- e-Medical Visa will be available for 161 countries.
- Presently, medical attendants are given Visa, but the Committee has recommended that medical attendants should also be given e-Medical Visa.
- The Committee also recommended that all hospitals should have a common Greet and Meet Counter and it should be at major Airports / Ports.
- Free SIM card at entry will be given to e-Medical Visa patient.
- Committee have recommended a Translation App at Airports/ Ports.
- All Medical Tourism Hospitals will have to be NABH or JCI Accredited. We are pushing for IMA accreditation also.
- The Committee also recommended that fee for e-Visa and e-Medical Visa should be the same.

-Ends-

About IMA: Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

For further information please contact:
Sanjeev Khanna - 9871079105
Md Adib Ahmad – 9873716235
mediaimahq@gmail.com

IMA Public & Media Advocacy Cell