

Catering to medical tourists

The Ramada is doing it right

By Ilene Little



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Hotel chains are realizing what they have to gain by catering to the special needs of medical tourists. The Ramada Plaza Herradura in San Jose, Costa Rica is a model that hotels in Baja California should follow if they are serious about competing for the medical tourism market.

Statistics indicate that tourists visiting Costa Rica on medical vacations spend six times more than the average vacationer. That's quite an up-tick, wouldn't you say?

The government and tourism industry, and now the hospitality industry, are beginning to take notice and respond to the demand. From what I witnessed, personally, this Ramada is a good example of how the hotel industry should respond. Here's what they've done and what they offer.

First of all they didn't enter the industry on a whim and a guess. They brought in a consulting firm to study the medical tourism industry in relation to the hotel's existing services and suggest additional services to add to the comfort of their medical guests. Then, they brought in a consultant to train the hospital staff—everyone from the cooks to the maids—on the special needs of medical tourists and the various scenarios hospital staff are likely to encounter. That's huge.

All this in addition to what all guests enjoy: free high-speed internet, discounts in their three award-winning restaurants, three swimming pools and a professionally staffed spa — and free access to the Cariari Country Club, located next to the hotel, with 18 holes of golf, an Olympic size swimming pool, tennis courts and gym. This hotel stands out as a blueprint for what other hotels need to do to serve medical tourists.

As a result, here's what you can expect if you're a medical tourist staying at the Ramada:

- ◀ Complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport, of course;
- ◀ Transportation to and from all major hospitals and clinics, free of charge. That's peace of mind in terms of navigating appointments, and a big savings in out-of-pocket taxi expenses;
- ◀ A private lobby with a separate entrance for medical tourists. This respects the privacy of medical patients. They're free to choose when they want to mingle with the rest of the hotel guests;
- ◀ A 24/7 nurse and physician on duty, free of charge;
- ◀ Free delivery from nearby pharmacy and medical supply stores; and
- ◀ Special menus and room service.



Tijuana hotels like The Pueblo Amigo cater to medical tourists from around the world.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Economic Development Council of Tijuana has created a Medical Service Lane to make the border crossing more accessible for patients. With this VIP treatment, your border wait is reduced to 30 minutes or less!

RAMADA
PLAZA HERRADURA
Golf Resort & Conference Center

The Thoughtful Choice of
Health & Wellness Travelers

San José, Costa Rica

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