

## **Medical Tourism and Wellness: Hospitality Bridging Healthcare (H2H)**

*Edited by Frederick J. DeMicco*

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Professor DeMicco edits a voluminous set of essays in the needed textbook on bridging hospitality with medical tourism. Medical tourism is nothing new and in fact is probably the original hospitality industry. So the editor's attempt to narrow that gap is noteworthy and deserves some further exploration.

Hospitality in tourism is nothing new, yet today one might not be able to say the same in medical care. The exception of course lies in health and wellness tourism and these industries have fully embraced hospitality (Erfurt-Cooper and Cooper, 2009; Smith and Puczkó, 2014).

Here Professor DeMicco emphasizes his Hospitality Bridging Healthcare (H2H) model, building on the needed business partnership between hospitals, hotels and other traditional hospitality services. Merging these two businesses is explained with several examples including the Five Star Bad Ragaz in Switzerland, a comprehensive resort opportunity that includes a medical health center and rehabilitation clinic. Catering to a mix of tourists, the facility also has a casino.

The theme of the text is introduced in a detailed preface and is followed by twenty-one chapters organized into three sections. Part I introduces the subject of Hospitality Bridging Healthcare (H2H) by the editor followed by his description of contemporary medical tourism. DeMicco ends the chapter with a report on travel habits of American travelers. Details from the 2013 study noted an increasing awareness of medical tourism and benefits Americans might receive by cross-border medical care. Chapter 2 provides a more comprehensive review of medical tourism and is useful for those not familiar with the topic.

Making up about half of the book, Part II highlights a systems model of H2H as a driver for high-quality patient/guest service delivery. The key phrase here is patient/guest, and this highlights the existing dichotomy between the healthcare industry and the more traditional hospitality fields like hotels, restaurants and travel provides. Eleven chapters in this section vary in theme from the attempt to model Disney



Hospitality to medical care to the new and growing field of medical marijuana tourism. One example uses the Mayo Clinic and the business approach to link patients with health care building on making Rochester Minnesota a potential destination city.

Domestic medical tourism is discussed in chapter 10. Useful in many ways, one of the more interesting aspects of this report was the proposal of a research agenda, something that I would have expected at the end of the book. Additionally, chapter 12 introduced future trends, still another interesting possibility to conclude the book. The remaining chapters introduce some interesting aspects to link the existing hospitality industry, primarily hotels with partners in the medical field.

Case studies are found in part III, and eight chapters take up regional and topical themes. For Europe, the Grand Resort Bad Ragaz is again showcased as an excellent illustration of five star hospitality offering health care. Several chapters highlight the significant contribution of Asian medical tourism destinations.

Other examples in Part III address changing information technological advances, where the operative word “information” aids both the medical team and the patient. For instance, the increased use of tablets, instead of a clipboard, means information is processed more quickly.

This title does add to the growing list of references on hospitality and health, wellness and medical tourism. The text is organized nicely in a textbook style of writing, and each chapter tends to be entirely self-contained and not relying on previous material found in the book. This is useful for the faculty who may wish to use only a few chapters in a class. I could see several chapters that would be useful reading material in undergraduate tourism and business classes. This also means that much of the material is repeated. As the title I reviewed was a prepublication eBook, I wonder how much additional editing is expected before it goes to press.

I can commend the editor on compiling a very comprehensive review on some of the issues needed to bridge the gap between hospitality and medical tourism. That said, the prepublication title was lacking an index, citations for many of the chapters were missing, figures were not labeled and other last-minute edits are needed prior to final publication. Given a 14-page preface nicely introduced the thesis, likewise I would have liked to read a concluding chapter that would provide the editor a chance to highlight the significant message about the H2H model.

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### **References**

- Erfurt-Cooper, P. and Cooper, M. (2009), *Health and Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot Springs*, Channel View Publications.
- Smith, M. and Puczko, L. (2014), *Health, Tourism and Hospitality: Spas, Wellness and Medical Travel*, Routledge.