



PROJECT MEDICAL TRAVEL

Chairperson: David Berg

Goals for this committee include:

- Identify ways to entice Canadians to get medical work done in Arizona
- Identify Arizona's point of differentiation from other states
- Encourage medical groups to put together package deals with cash bundle pricing for procedures that include all expenses
- Be a leader for the medical industry and define a path they can follow and sustain
- Change narrative from medical procedures to diagnostics
- Change the marketing message so it's about speed, cost, and certainty
- Write up a draft concept for tourism offices to review and use for marketing

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Canadians are seeking healthcare outside of Canada in the global market, as medical services and wait times continue to grow in the country. Arizona's seasonal resident (snowbirds) have been the state's medical tourist for decades due to their need for medical doctors and services during their extended stay. However, the growing market of Canadians with expendable money seeking healthcare outside of Canada is a tourism segment that can no longer be ignored. Arizona's medical groups and hospitals are beginning to understand the potential and benefits of marketing to this group. The CABC has created Project Medical Tourism as an initiative to elevate the awareness of the growing Canadian medical tourism market to the state's medical and tourism community. Also to encourage these communities to create specialized programs and services for these potential clients with focused (bi-lingual) marketing strategies, specific to Canadians, so that Arizona has the opportunity to showcase its world-class medical services, capture the attention and to re-direct the Canadian market to Arizona.

There is a golden opportunity to reap the many benefits of the Canadian medical tourist. This is a very lucrative group of Canadians who are afforded the luxury of by-passing the Canadian healthcare system with expendable money to pay cash for non-critical and diagnostic services. Canadians will pay upfront cash for services ranging from preventative, diagnostic/scans, dental, ophthalmologic, orthopedic to other non-elective and elective care and procedures. These cash paying patients save doctors, medical groups and hospitals a significant amount of time and money without lengthy time spent on insurance approvals, payments and collections from all parties. Freeing up time to practice medicine and not wasting resources on a time-depleting insurance business model, ultimately lowers the cost of medical care for everyone.

Medical procedures that are non-critical can take up to a year and a half, sometimes longer in Canada. That amount of time can be extremely painful for patients who are waiting for orthopedic knee and back surgeries. Longer wait time for the patient means a longer duration for pain management. This can result in possible addiction to pain killers, while also effecting work, mobility, independent living and family relationships. In the case of a time sensitive diagnosis, a month to two months waiting for scans and other diagnostics is not an option that anyone would want. Getting medical care in Arizona, immediately shortens the time frame for second opinions, diagnostics and medical services for urgent and non-urgent care.

Medical tourism has many benefits, including foreign direct and indirect investments and has contributed to the state's growth, specifically along the border of Arizona and Mexico. There has been an influx of Canadian seasonal residents along the state's border, like Yuma and Douglas for several decades. Canadians living in these areas have the option to draw upon doctors, medical centers and dental groups on both sides of the border. These seasonal snowbirds are an important contributor along Arizona's southern border to populations growth, job creation and an additional economic base through utilizing the local medical services, buying real estate, supporting local business, and spending money on goods and services.

Through decades of watching Canadian trends in healthcare and medical tourism, the CABC is primed to bring awareness to Arizona's medical professionals and entities that Canadian medical tourism is a vast and growing market segment that should not be overlooked. Project Medical Tourism encourages all Arizona agencies to back their medical communities in bringing awareness to tourism and medical services in a synergistic effort. Arizona offers a premier level of medical care, facilities, affordable services, shorter time for receiving care, diagnostics and second opinions to the Canadian healthcare shopper. The Grand Canyon State is a tourist state-now it's time for medical tourism to become part of the attraction.