



# PROJECT MEDICAL TRAVEL

Chairperson: David Berg

Goals for this committee include:

## Goal 1: **Increase Awareness of Arizona's Medical Travel Potential in Canada**

- **Objective:** Raise awareness among Canadian citizens and healthcare professionals about Arizona's world-class medical services, shorter wait times, and affordability compared to Canadian healthcare.
- **Action:** Launch a targeted marketing campaign in Canada focusing on the benefits of medical travel in Arizona, emphasizing **high-quality care**, **affordable procedures**, and **immediate access** to non-critical and diagnostic services.
- **Target Audience:** Canadian consumers seeking non-urgent or elective procedures, as well as healthcare professionals who can refer patients seeking faster, cost-effective care.

## Goal 2: **Encourage Arizona's Healthcare Providers to Build Specialized Programs for Canadian Patients**

- **Objective:** Develop tailored healthcare services and packages for Canadian medical tourists that address their specific needs, including bilingual support (English/French), streamlined services, and flexible payment options.
- **Action:** Work with Arizona hospitals, clinics, and specialists to create and promote medical tourism packages that cater specifically to the Canadian market.
- **Target Audience:** Arizona healthcare providers, tourism agencies, and related businesses in the state's medical sector.

## Goal 3: **Facilitate Bilingual Marketing and Communication Strategies**

- **Objective:** Ensure that medical travel outreach to Canadian patients is accessible and comfortable by offering bilingual marketing materials (English and French) and providing bilingual customer service.
- **Action:** Develop a comprehensive marketing campaign with bilingual (English/French) brochures, websites, and advertising to appeal to French-speaking Canadians in particular.
- **Target Audience:** French-speaking Canadians who may feel more comfortable with French-language services and information.

#### Goal 4: **Promote Arizona's Healthcare Facilities as a Hub for Non-Critical and Diagnostic Care**

- **Objective:** Position Arizona as a leading destination for non-critical and diagnostic services, including preventive care, orthopedic procedures, dental work, ophthalmology, and diagnostic imaging that Canadians may wait over a year for in their home country.
- **Action:** Partner with medical centers, hospitals, and private clinics in Arizona to promote specialties where Arizona can deliver services **faster, more affordably, and with better outcomes** than Canadian healthcare.
- **Target Audience:** Canadian patients in need of **orthopedic surgery, dentistry, diagnostic tests** (scans), **elective procedures**, and **second opinions**.

#### Goal 5: **Encourage the Development of Seamless Medical Travel Packages**

- **Objective:** Create streamlined travel and healthcare packages that include not only medical services but also **travel logistics, accommodation, and concierge services** to enhance the overall experience for Canadian medical tourists.
- **Action:** Collaborate with airlines, travel agencies, and hotels to design **all-inclusive packages** that make medical travel to Arizona easy and accessible. This would include transport to and from healthcare facilities, concierge services, and accommodations.
- **Target Audience:** Canadian individuals, families, or groups seeking comprehensive medical tourism experiences in Arizona.

#### Goal 6: **Leverage Existing Seasonal Canadian Resident Population (Snowbirds)**

- **Objective:** Engage Arizona's existing population of Canadian **snowbirds** (seasonal residents) to help market Arizona as a healthcare destination, encouraging them to utilize local healthcare services while they stay in Arizona.
- **Action:** Reach out to Canadian snowbirds who already visit Arizona seasonally, offering incentives for **healthcare referrals** or introducing specialized packages that allow them to access non-urgent care, diagnostic procedures, and wellness services.
- **Target Audience:** Canadian snowbirds who are already familiar with Arizona as a winter destination.

#### Goal 7: **Build Strategic Partnerships Between Arizona's Healthcare Providers and Canadian Insurers**

- **Objective:** Explore the potential for partnerships with **Canadian insurance companies** to cover medical procedures in Arizona, or to provide **reimbursement options** for Canadian patients who seek services in Arizona.
- **Action:** Work with Arizona medical facilities and Canadian insurance companies to understand the opportunities for **insurance coverage, pre-authorization, and reimbursement** that can be applied to Canadian medical tourists.
- **Target Audience:** Canadian insurance companies, Arizona healthcare providers, and Canadian medical tourists who may seek to use their insurance benefits in Arizona.

#### Goal 8: **Optimize the Border Region's Medical Infrastructure**

- **Objective:** Utilize Arizona's proximity to **Mexico** to offer an integrated, cross-border healthcare model that provides seamless access to medical services for Canadian tourists seeking care in Arizona, especially in **border cities** like Yuma and Douglas.
- **Action:** Promote cross-border healthcare collaboration where Canadian patients staying in Arizona or northern Mexico can take advantage of both **U.S. and Mexican healthcare systems**, which could offer complementary care or more affordable options.
- **Target Audience:** Canadian medical tourists located in **Arizona's southern border areas** (Yuma, Douglas) and across the border in **Mexico**.

#### Goal 9: **Create Research and Data Collection Systems for Tracking Canadian Medical Tourism**

- **Objective:** Establish a database to track Canadian medical tourism trends, including **procedures, spending patterns, and demographics**, to ensure that Arizona's medical tourism efforts are data-driven and continually improving.
- **Action:** Collaborate with Arizona medical groups and tourism authorities to establish a system for tracking Canadian patients, collecting feedback, and measuring the success of the marketing and service programs.
- **Target Audience:** Arizona healthcare providers, tourism agencies, and the CABC's member businesses involved in medical tourism.

#### Goal 10: **Position Arizona as a Leader in International Medical Tourism**

- **Objective:** Expand Arizona's reputation beyond just the Canadian market, attracting international medical tourists who are looking for high-quality, affordable, and timely care.
- **Action:** Position Arizona as a **medical tourism hub** for international patients, with special emphasis on Canadian medical tourism, but also looking toward other nations with underserved healthcare systems or high medical wait times.
- **Target Audience:** International medical tourists and patients from countries with long wait times or high healthcare costs (e.g., United Kingdom, European Union).

## **Conclusion**

Project Medical Tourism aims to position **Arizona** as a premier healthcare destination for **Canadians** seeking quicker, more affordable medical care. By focusing on this growing and lucrative market segment, Arizona can strengthen its healthcare sector while contributing significantly to the state's economy through foreign direct investments, tourism dollars, and job creation.

Through **targeted marketing, specialized medical programs, bilingual services, and strategic partnerships**, Project Medical Tourism will make Arizona the **leading healthcare provider** for Canadians seeking care outside of their home country.

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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.