

Medical tourism set to exceed RM630m

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HEALTHY GROWTH: High quality and affordability the key drivers

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MALAYSIA'S medical tourism industry is expected to grow beyond RM630 million this year, driven by high quality healthcare services at affordable prices, said Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC).

The council has forecast a total of 700,000 foreigners coming to Malaysia for treatment this year.

"The number of foreign patients has jumped by 15 per cent from about 583,000 in 2011 to more than 670,000 last year.

"We expect the momentum to be sustained," said MHTC chief executive officer Dr Mary Wong.

She believes that the high quality yet affordable healthcare facilities and services are the main drivers of the industry.

"This is further boosted by affordable hotel rates and short waiting

period in getting medical treatment," she added.

Malaysia recorded 25 million tourist arrivals last year.

Established in 2009 and under the purview of the Health Ministry, MHTC has been tasked to streamline both private and government healthcare service providers and industry players.

Indonesia, India and Japan were Malaysia's top three markets in terms of patients seeking medical treatment here last year.

Cardiology, auto-paptic cancer and in vitro fertilisation are the most sought after services by foreign patients.

Dr Wong was speaking at a press conference by Prince Court

Medical Centre, which has been named the top hospital for medical tourists this year by Medical Travel Quality Alliance (MTQUA).

The luxury private healthcare facility is wholly-owned by Petroliam Nasional Bhd and was built at a cost of RM544 million in 2007.

The hospital was in the spotlight after reporting a combined pre-tax loss of RM653.83 million in 2009 and 2010, but is targeting to be profitable in five years.

"Business is picking up, patient volume is growing and our revenue recorded

23 to 25 per cent growth last year," said Prince Court chief executive officer Dr Chong Su Lin.



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Dr Mary Wong
MHTC CEO