

I have seen the future of health care... and it's not US

Written by Administrator

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I recently had the opportunity to accompany a friend to Bangkok for surgery. She is caught in a typical bind. She changed jobs and insurance but came up with a "pre-existing condition" so was unable to buy insurance. However, she needed a hysterectomy.

The economics are simple and shocking. The local hospital quoted her \$40,000 for the surgery. Add in the doctor, radiologist, pathologist, anesthesiologist and all the others that come out of the woodwork to feed on the sick and we're looking at \$50,000 plus. This is not an easy out of pocket expense for anyone except the very rich (who are doing quite well, these days).

We investigated alternatives and came up with Bumrungrad International in Bangkok. It's a world class medical facility accredited by the US based Joint Commission... the same organization which accredits US hospitals. We arrived late Monday and had our appointment Tuesday morning. She was seen by an experience board certified surgeon and specialist in laparoscopic surgery. She was also seen by an Internist for medical clearance. Lab, Chest X-ray, EKG and ultrasound were all completed the same day and surgery was scheduled for Wednesday morning.

Everyone we dealt with was extremely helpful and competent. Everyone we dealt with spoke English fluently. The hospital is very well organized and more like a luxury hotel. They have state of the art medical equipment and a computer information system for complete electronic medical records. All of the tests and exams were entered into the EMR and were available to the doctors. The internist had the EKG, chest x-ray and lab work on his computer within an hour.

Top quality care and service. Bottom line... about one tenth of the cost of having the surgery in the US.