



4th World Medical Tourism & Global Healthcare Congress

(November 02-11)

Last week, Chairman of the Bermuda Health Council, Linda Merritt, spoke at the 4th World Medical Tourism and Global Healthcare Congress in Chicago, IL, last week.

Ms. Merritt was invited to the conference by the Medical Tourism Association to speak on a panel of Caribbean and Latin American countries.

The conference, which attracted more than 4,000 attendees and 400 vendors from countries such as Syria, Taiwan, Thailand, Germany, Saudi Arabia, USA, Egypt and platinum sponsor Turkey, was also featured in Bloomberg News.

Ms. Merritt, spoke in the Educational Session on Bermuda's health accounts, demographics/location, Bermuda's openness to business, regulatory environment and future potential for marketing Bermuda, and its natural beauty, for health/wellness tourism.

Revenues worldwide in health tourism are projected to be over \$100 billion dollars by 2013, and India expects 10 percent of its revenues from medical tourism.

To take advantage of the worldwide revenue, Ms. Merritt invited participants to seek business opportunities by partnering with Bermuda's entrepreneurs in developing a world-class product in health tourism, which will include "Spa and Wellness" tourism.

Ms. Merritt said: "It was a great opportunity for networking with healthcare providers, medical physicians, entrepreneurs and buyers at the four-day conference."

Out of her many conversations, Ms Merritt said, there was a real interest in having a smaller women's health and wellness conference in Bermuda in 2012. She hopes to follow up with this idea to bring it to fruition.

She was also delighted to sit in sessions with Google presenters, Social marketing executives and to listen to sessions on Proctor & Gamble's corporate worldwide wellness strategies.

The key messages for possibly bringing medical/wellness tourism to Bermuda, Ms. Merritt said, were the provision of technological requirements such as electronic-medical records capability. Secondly, Bermuda needed travel agents trained in medical concierge services; some countries focused on the high-end, medical travelers provided everything from limousine services to prayer rooms for Islamic clients.

Ms. Merritt added that to take advantage of possible medical tourism, Bermudian entrepreneurs must have a solid business plan to be well-positioned strategically in the business of health/wellness tourism.

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