



COLUMBIA & WEILL CORNELL

International and Corporate Health

Policy Implications to the Medical Community

What International Patients Mean to U.S Healthcare

- Unusual and Complicated Medical Cases
- Collaboration in Research and Training
- Good Will
- New Sources of Revenue
- Multiplier Effect – for every healthcare dollar spent three are generated for hotel, shopping, entertainment, etc.
- A showcase for our technology & equipment



Since September 11th

- Middle Eastern patients are not coming to the U.S.
- Increasingly difficult for patients from Asia (China, India)
- Skilled scientists, physicians, and nurses are turned away or delayed (J-1, B-1/B-2)
- Increasing competition from Medical Tourism (Thailand, India, Singapore)
- Patients are establishing relationships with other payors and non U.S. hospitals

Barriers

- Time delay for medically needy patients
- No multiple re-entries for follow up medical treatment
- Patients often must travel significant distances for the interview
- Patient may get visa, but organ donor may not
- Patient may get visa, but guardian may not
- Changing and additive Visa procedures



Cultural Barriers

- Middle Eastern Patients are concerned that they may be targets of retribution
- Prospective patients feel that they are being demeaned throughout the Visa process
- Prospective patients feel disconnected from the approval process – they don't know where they stand
- They feel that the process is continually changing

Cultural Barriers Continued

- The actual forms are complicated for some patients (even in their own language)
- The prospective patients are already under a great deal of stress
- Prospective patients often don't understand why they were rejected and if they can reapply



We Understand

- That security concerns are paramount
- That the consulates are overburdened
- That prospective patients can give incomplete or misleading information
- That the process is time consuming and subject to change

What We Hope to Accomplish

- We want our patients to receive the care they need when they need it
- Open communication between Hospitals and U.S. consular staff
- Relaxation of having to pay a visa fee following a rejection for incomplete information
- A stabilization of Visa procedures
- Hold the Line but remember that this is often our patients' first impression of the United States



What We Hope to Accomplish Continued

- An understanding that Pediatric patients need both parents and Adult patients need care givers and/or loved ones
- That we all understand the lasting implications to the vitality of our centers of academic medicine