

**BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS**

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**चिकित्सा मूल्य यात्रा सेवाओं और कल्याण सेवाओं के लिए शब्दावली**

**TERMINOLOGY FOR MEDICAL VALUE TRAVEL SERVICES AND WELLNESS SERVICES**

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Medical Value Travel and Wellness Services Sectional Committee, SSD 16

**FOREWORD**

*(Formal clauses will be added later)*

This document contains definitions of a number of terms commonly used in the medical tourism industry. The document is designed to facilitate understanding between the users and medical tourism service providers. Assisting consumers to make an informed choice about medical tourism services has the potential to increase the likelihood of expectations being met and of satisfactions being enhanced. The medical tourism industry will also benefit from better-informed consumers.

Medical tourism terminology is an important way to align terms to enhance the safe delivery of medical tourism services. This document specifies the most common terms and their definitions used in medical tourism related services. This document was developed to provide a better understanding of adventure tourism terms and their context within the market.

This document is also intended to be of value to those developing other medical tourism and travel standards, to facilitate relations between different sectors in the medical tourism market and to aid policymakers.

(WC Draft)

## TERMINOLOGY FOR MEDICAL VALUE TRAVEL SERVICES AND WELLNESS SERVICES

### 1 SCOPE

This standard outlines the terminology used for Medical Value Travel Services and Wellness Services, providing definitions for commonly used terms in these fields.

NOTE — Only generic terms related to the Medical Value Travel Services and Wellness Services are covered in this standard. Specific terms related to medical treatments are outside the scope of this standard.

### 2 TERM AND DEFINITION

**2.1 Accident** — Any unforeseen event or incident that causes harm or injury to a patient while they are traveling abroad for medical treatment. This harm or injury could be directly related to the medical procedure they underwent or could occur during their travel or stay in the destination country.

**2.2 Accreditation** — Certification or recognition granted to a healthcare facility by an authorized body, indicating that it meets certain standards of quality and safety in healthcare delivery.

NOTE — Accreditation can be international or specific to a country.

**2.3 Ayush** — Ayush is an acronym that stands for traditional systems of medicine practiced in India. It encompasses several holistic and alternative healthcare systems that have their roots in ancient Indian traditions. The term "Ayush" includes Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy.

**2.4 Ayush Visa** — A visa category specifically for foreigners visiting India for treatment under Ayush systems/Indian systems of medicine like therapeutic care, wellness and Yoga.

**2.5 Care Plan** — Documentation of the assessment, diagnosis, treatment, monitoring and re-evaluation of the patient/client, including medications, treatment procedures, diagnostic tests/evaluations, and ancillary services prescribed in the context of patient/client care.

NOTE — Some of the concierge services that a hospital/wellness centre may offer to a medical tourist are:

- a) Assistance with travel arrangements, such as booking flights, hotels, transportation, and visas;
- b) Coordination of appointments, tests, procedures, and follow-ups with the medical team and the patient's home country doctors;
- c) Provision of interpreters, translators, and cultural guides to facilitate communication and understanding;
- d) Access to amenities, such as Wi-Fi, TV, phone, laundry, meals, and recreational facilities;
- e) Support for special needs, such as dietary restrictions, religious preferences, accessibility issues, and emotional counselling;
- f) Coordinate with Visa Assistance Centres to provide medical visa/ayush visa on urgent medical grounds;
- g) Local SIM card, registration with police, foreign exchange, local transport, shopping, sightseeing & visa extensions;
- h) Complimentary airport pick-up and drop for international patients; and
- j) Affordable accommodation at nearby guest houses/ hotels for patients and attendants.

**2.6 Clinical Outcomes** — Clinical outcomes refer to the measurable changes in health, function, or quality of life that result from healthcare services and interventions. These outcomes provide objective data to assess the effectiveness and quality of medical treatments.

**2.7 Concierge Services** — Services provided by the facilitator, the healthcare provider, or both, aimed at enhancing the medical tourist's experience.

**2.8 Continuing Medical Education** — Educational programs and activities (offline and online) designed to update medical professional's knowledge and skills, often including conferences, workshops, and online courses.

**2.9 Continuum of Care** — A comprehensive approach to healthcare that involves seamless coordination of medical services across different providers and settings, from initial consultation and diagnosis to treatment, recovery, and follow-up care.

**2.10 Cost Transparency** — The practice of providing clear and detailed information about the costs associated with medical treatments, procedures, and services offered to patients traveling for healthcare.

**2.11 Courtesy Service** — Services that enhances patient care, offered by the accommodation establishment for free. Examples are offering a drink when the room is not ready, looking after luggage, offering late check-out, offering fruit in the room, giving access to hotel services, a free drink, airport shuttle service.

**2.12 Cross-Border Healthcare Directive** — Legislation enacted by countries that facilitates patient's access to healthcare services in other countries. It enables patients to seek medical treatment abroad for various reasons, including shorter wait times, access to specialized expertise or technologies, or cost considerations.

**2.13 Cultural Competency Training** — Education and training programs designed to help healthcare providers understand and respect patient's cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and practices. Cultural competency training is important in medical tourism to ensure effective communication and respectful care for patients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

**2.14 Destination Hospital/Clinic/Wellness Centre** — The medical or Health facility where the patient receives treatment or undergoes procedures. These facilities are often chosen for their specialized services, expertise, and reputation in specific medical fields, including traditional systems of medicine.

**2.15 Digital Health Passport** — Secure digital platforms or applications that store individual's health information, medical records, and vaccination history, facilitating seamless access to healthcare services and travel across borders.

**2.16 Elective Procedure** — Non-emergency medical treatment or surgery that is planned in advance and not considered urgent or lifesaving. Many medical tourists seek elective procedures such as cosmetic surgery, dental treatments, or orthopaedic surgeries.

**2.17 Emergency** — A sudden and unexpected medical situation or condition that requires immediate attention and intervention. Emergencies can occur before, during, or after a medical procedure while the patient is traveling abroad for treatment.

**2.18 Emergency Medical Evacuation** — The urgent transport of a patient to a healthcare facility equipped to provide specialized medical treatment or critical care services in cases of serious illness, injury, or medical emergencies while traveling abroad for medical purposes.

**2.19 Ethical Considerations** — Concerns related to the ethical implications of medical tourism, including patient safety, informed consent, and the impact on local healthcare systems.

**2.20 Ethical Tourism Practices** — Principles and guidelines governing the ethical conduct of stakeholders in the medical tourism industry, including healthcare providers, facilitators, and destination countries, to uphold patient safety, dignity, and rights.

**2.21 Follow-up Care** — Post-treatment or post-surgery visits to monitor patient recovery and progress, ensuring no complications arise.

**2.22 Foreign Relation/Registration Officer** — The officer who deals directly for the registration of the foreign patient in the healthcare provider institute/wellness service centre.

**2.23 Geriatric Care** — Healthcare services provided to elderly patients.

**2.24 Global Health Insurance** — Insurance coverage that provides international coverage for healthcare services, medical treatments, and emergency medical evacuation for policyholders traveling abroad, offering financial protection and peace of mind for medical tourists.

**2.25 Global Patient Services** — Specialized services provided by hospitals, clinics, or medical tourism facilitators to cater to the needs of international patients, including language interpretation, visa assistance, cultural orientation, and travel logistics.

**2.26 Health Information Exchange** — The electronic sharing of patients' medical information and health records among healthcare organizations and systems to improve care coordination, clinical decision-making, and patient outcomes, especially in the context of cross-border healthcare.

**2.27 Health Insurance Portability** — The ability of patients to use their health insurance coverage or benefits for medical treatment received in another country. Some health insurance plans offer international coverage or reimbursement for medical expenses incurred abroad.

**2.28 Health Tourism Cluster** — A geographic area or region that concentrates a significant number of healthcare providers, facilities, and supporting services catering to medical tourists, often collaborating to enhance the destination's attractiveness and competitiveness.

**2.29 Health Tourism Promotion** — Marketing, advertising, and promotional activities undertaken by destinations, hospitals, healthcare providers, or tourism agencies to attract international patients, medical tourists, or wellness travellers to their facilities or destinations.

**2.30 Health Tourism Regulatory Framework** — The set of regulations, laws, and policies governing the medical tourism industry, including standards for healthcare facilities & wellness centres patient rights, medical malpractice, and liability issues.

**2.31 Health Travel Advisory** — Guidance and recommendations provided to medical tourists by healthcare professionals, travel agencies, or destination authorities regarding travel logistics, health precautions, medical facilities, and local regulations in destination countries.

**2.32 Healthcare** — Activities to maintain and improve the health of individuals or the general population. Healthcare refers to the medical services and treatments sought by individuals who travel from their home country to another country to receive medical care.

**2.33 Healthcare Consultant** — Consultant who has entered in an agreement with a hospital or wellness centre for rendering services and support to international patients.

**2.34 Healthcare Destination Management Organization** — An entity responsible for managing and promoting a specific healthcare destination or medical tourism destination, including destination marketing, stakeholder coordination, patient facilitation, and quality assurance initiatives.

**2.35 Healthcare Diplomacy** — International efforts and collaborations among countries to strengthen healthcare partnerships, exchange medical expertise, and promote mutual benefits in the global healthcare arena.

**2.36 Healthcare Provider** — Organisations where medical tourists are given medical consultation, diagnosis, rehabilitation and medical or surgical treatment for all systems of medicine recognized under applicable Indian laws. For example, Clinics, Hospitals, day care centres, Wellness Centres and Rehabilitation Centres etc.

**2.37 Healthcare Quality Metrics** — Standards and measurements used to evaluate the quality of healthcare services provided by hospitals and clinics, including patient outcomes, infection rates, patient satisfaction, and accreditation status.

**2.38 Healthcare Staff** – Qualified staff of a healthcare provider who are skilled to provide clinical, para-medical and nursing services along with administrative and management support to medical tourists.

**2.39 High-Quality Care** — Refers to the provision of medical services that meet or exceed established standards of excellence, ensuring optimal health outcomes for patients.

**2.40 Holistic Health** — An approach to wellness that considers the whole person, including physical, mental, and social factors.

**2.41 Hospitality Services** — Additional amenities and support services provided to medical tourists and their accompanying companions, such as airport transfers, accommodation arrangements, leisure activities, and concierge assistance.

**2.42 Inbound Medical Tourism** — Refers to individuals traveling to a country to receive medical treatment in that country. Unlike traditional outbound medical tourism, where individuals travel from their home country to seek medical care abroad, inbound medical tourism involves patients coming into a country to access healthcare services, encompassing the services through traditional systems of medicine.

**2.43 Incident**— Any unexpected event, occurrence, or situation that may disrupt or impact the patient's medical journey or experience. Incidents can range from minor inconveniences to more serious complications and may occur at any stage of the medical tourism process, including before, during, or after the medical procedure.

**2.44 Informed Written Consent** — The process of obtaining permission from a patient after providing them with relevant information about the proposed medical treatment, including its risks, benefits, alternatives, and potential outcomes. Informed consent is an ethical and legal requirement in medical practice. Informed Consent will be made available to medical tourist in their preferred official language.

**2.45 In-Patient Care** — It refers to medical treatment or care provided to patients who require hospitalization. This means the patient is admitted to a hospital or medical facility and stays overnight, or for an extended period, to receive the necessary treatment and monitoring. In-patient care is typically required for serious conditions, surgeries, or treatments that cannot be adequately managed with outpatient services.

**2.46 Integrative Healthcare** — Is an approach to healthcare that emphasizes the collaboration of conventional medical treatments with complementary and alternative therapies (CAM) to address the physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual aspects of health and well-being.

**2.47 Integrative Medicine** — Combining conventional medicine with alternative and complementary therapies for holistic treatment.

**2.48 International Patient Department (IPD)/ Foreign Patients Department (FPD)** — A specialized department within a healthcare facility that manages the care and services provided to international patients, including coordination of treatment, translation services, and cultural support.

**2.49 International Patient Services** — A team of trained professionals inside hospital, which is responsible for International Patients' Care during his/her, stay with hospital.

**2.50 Itinerary** — Description of the component parts involved in the medical tourism activity, listing times, locations and activities.

**2.51 Language Services** — Interpretation and translation services provided to help international patients communicate effectively with healthcare providers.

**2.52 Medical Procedure** — Any activity/action performed with the purpose of providing healthcare or medical treatment to an individual, through any of the systems of medicine recognized under applicable Indian laws including Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy encompassing a wide range of actions from simple treatments to complex surgeries, diagnostic tests, and therapeutic interventions.

**2.53 Medical Professional** — A professional qualified in any legally recognized system of medicine including the Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy and registered by the relevant Authority or the governing body for that profession as constituted under the applicable statute.

**2.54 Medical Records Transfer** — The secure transmission of patients' medical records, diagnostic reports, and treatment histories between healthcare providers in different countries to ensure continuity of care and informed decision-making.

**2.55 Medical Tourism/Medical Value Travel** — It the process of traveling outside one's country of residence for the purpose of receiving medical care.

**2.56 Medical Tourist** — An individual travelling for seeking healthcare services. A medical tourist is someone who travels to another country or region for the purpose of receiving medical care or treatment.

**2.57 Medical Value Travel Facilitator** – A medical tourism facilitator is an intermediary or organization that assists individuals, often referred to as medical tourists, in organizing and arranging their medical and healthcare-related trips abroad. They facilitate the process of seeking medical treatment, surgeries, or wellness services in foreign countries by connecting patients with appropriate healthcare providers, assisting with travel logistics, coordinating appointments, and providing necessary information and support throughout the medical travel journey.

**2.58 Medical Visa** — A visa category specifically for individuals traveling to another country for medical treatment. Some countries offer special medical visas or require medical tourists to obtain specific documentation for entry.

**2.59 Outbound Medical Tourism** — Refers to individuals traveling from their home country to another country for medical treatment.

**2.60 Out-patient Care** — It refers to medical services and treatments that do not require an overnight stay in a hospital or medical facility. Patients visit the healthcare facility for their procedure, treatment, or consultation and return home the same day. Outpatient care is often suitable for less severe medical conditions, routine check-ups, diagnostic tests, minor surgeries, and follow-up appointments.

**2.61 Package Tour** — A bundled offering that includes medical treatment, travel, accommodation, and sometimes leisure activities. Medical tourism agencies or facilitators often arrange these packages for patients traveling abroad for treatment.

**2.62 Patient Centered Care** — A healthcare approach that prioritizes the needs, preferences, and values of the patient, involving them in decision-making, respecting their autonomy, and providing personalized care throughout their medical journey.

**2.63 Patient Experience** — It refers to the sum of all interactions, perceptions, and feelings that a patient has throughout their entire healthcare journey, from seeking care to receiving treatment and follow-up.

**2.64 Patient Rights and Responsibilities** — Legal and ethical principles that protect patients' interests and outline their entitlements, as well as their obligations in seeking and receiving medical care abroad. This may include informed consent, privacy protection, and access to medical records.

**2.65 Patient Satisfaction Surveys** — Feedback mechanisms used to assess patients' experiences, satisfaction levels, and perceptions of the quality of care received during their medical travel journey. These surveys help healthcare providers and medical tourism stakeholders improve service delivery and patient outcomes.

**2.66 Post Operative Care** — Medical care and support provided to patients after they undergo surgery or treatment. This may include follow-up appointments, rehabilitation, medication management, and monitoring for complications.

**2.67 Preventive Care** — Services aimed at preventing illness, such as screenings, vaccinations, and lifestyle counselling, provided in an outpatient setting.

**2.68 Primary Care** — General health services provided by primary care physicians, including preventive care, diagnosis, and treatment of common illnesses.

**2.69 Recovery and Rehabilitation** — Post-treatment care provided to medical tourists to aid their recovery, often including physical therapy and rehabilitation services.

**2.70 Repatriation** — The process of returning a patient to their home country after receiving medical treatment abroad. This often involves arranging transportation and coordinating with medical professionals in both the destination and home countries.



**2.71 Repatriation of Mortal Remains** — Sending back of the body of a deceased person by complying the regulatory norms.

**2.72 Second-opinion Service** — Consulting another medical professional for a second opinion on a diagnosis or treatment plan.

**2.73 Telemedicine** — Utilization of advanced telecommunication technologies to exchange health information and deliver healthcare services, overcoming geographic, temporal, social and cultural barriers. Telemedicine can help medical tourists in providing pre-and post-operative care through online consultations, remote monitoring, and care instructions and by reducing unnecessary traveling and saving costs by allowing patients to receive follow-up care from their home country.

**2.74 Temporary Discharge** — Permission granted to the medical tourist to depart from the healthcare provider and resume the treatment at a later stage, especially when the treatment is conducted in multiple stages. Temporary discharge is a term used to describe a situation where a medical tourist is allowed to leave the hospital for a certain period of time and resume the treatment later. This may happen when the treatment involves multiple stages or procedures that are spaced out over time like in case of treatments of cancer and organ transplantation etc.

**2.75 Third Party** — External organization or individual that provides services to the medical tourism service provider(s).

**2.76 Treatment** — Healthcare provided to medical tourist for an illness, injury or disease with the goal of restoring their health or enhancing their quality of life. A medical treatment is a type of intervention that aims to improve the health or well-being of a patient who has a disease or disorder.

**2.77 Visa Facilitation** — Assistance with obtaining medical visas required for travel to certain countries for medical treatment.

**2.78 Visa Invitation Letter** — A letter issued by treating hospital to the Indian High Commission/Embassy in patient's country for the purpose of getting medical visa/ ayush visa.

**2.79 Wellness Tourism** — Travel undertaken with the primary purpose of promoting health and well-being through activities such as spa treatments, fitness retreats, mindfulness workshops, and nutritional counselling.