

Mexico Real Estate and Investment News

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Mexico Health Care Answer For U.S. Reforms?

As the health care reform debate rages in the Senate to the north, many U.S. baby-boomers south of the border have already found their solution for quality, affordable medical treatment.

A recent article from *Time* magazine pointed to the trend of Americans moving to Mexico, not just to relax in the sun, but also to take advantage of **Mexico health care**.

Paul Crist, an expat resort owner in Puerto Vallarta, told the news magazine that covering medical treatment in Mexico could save Medicare almost a quarter of the average cost for most procedures. "My research, as well as the research of others, shows that health care in Mexico costs less than a third of that in the U.S.", he said.

It's a great solution, but, despite the benefits, Medicare does not currently cover treatment in Mexico. Crist told *Time* this means many Medicare-eligible expats **living in Mexico** are forced to travel back to the U.S. for medical treatment, even though they have paid into the system during their working lives.

Time quoted examples of Mexico health care costs compared with those in the U.S. from various studies and reliable sources: a doctor's office visit or house call costs only \$25 to \$40 in Mexico; a hip replacement costs \$12,000 with Mexico health care compared with \$43,000 and \$63,000 in the U.S.; and a coronary bypass in Mexico costs an average of \$21,000 compared to \$149,000 in the U.S. - savings and quality treatment that could be enough to make anyone feel fit again.



As the health debate continues, expect to hear more about the benefits of allowing Medicare to cover Mexico health care. Although there may be opposition from some U.S. health care industry groups, expats south of the border support the idea (about 200,000 of the 1 million U.S. citizens living in Mexico are thought to be Medicare-eligible) as well as others who see the common sense savings that can be made by using Mexico health care where convenient.

As Crist told *Time*, "The opportunity to provide services to Americans at much lower cost outside the U.S. border is enormous. This is pushing even private insurers to explore coverage options outside of the U.S., and Medicare will certainly be a part of this globalization, sooner or later."

In the meantime, expect the tide of Americans moving south of the border to continue. Whether vacation home owners or retirees, whether Medicare users or not, one of the top reasons for people to move south will continue to be the economical benefit of high quality Mexico health care.

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