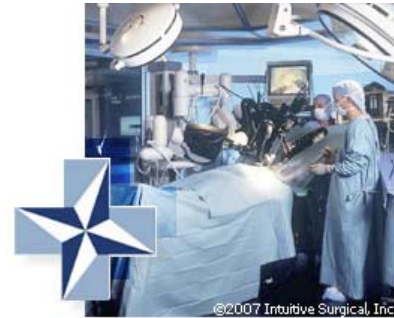


# Powerful Patient 2008 week 37

Host: Joyce Graff, WebTalkRadio.net

## Medical Tourism

What if you needed a knee replacement, and your employer offered you a medical tourism option? Instead of having the surgery in the U.S., fly to New Zealand with a companion, spend a few days touring, have the surgery there, and they will waive all co-pays. Consumer-driven health care is going global.



### 1) About Our Guests

Paul Brough is President and CEO of Pinnacle Health in Massachusetts, a health care Provider Organization providing network and administrative services on a direct contracting basis to self-funded employers. <http://www.pinnaclehealth.com>

Edward Watson, M.D., is CEO of MedTral New Zealand. MedTral is marketing its services primarily to the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain, providing quality health care at an affordable price. For Americans, the total costs are generally about one-fourth of the cost of the same procedure in the U.S. For those from Canada and England, the primary advantage is to avoid the waiting time associated with many elective surgical procedures.

### 2) About Medical Travel

According to Deloitte Consulting (August 2008), an estimated 750,000 Americans went abroad for health care in 2007. That number is expected to reach 1.5 million in 2008, and to top 4 million in 2010.

For Americans, cost is the primary driving factor. For example, a heart-valve replacement that would cost \$200,000 or more in the US, for example, goes for \$10,000 in India--and that includes round-trip airfare and a brief vacation package. Similarly, a metal-free dental bridge worth \$5,500 in the US costs \$500 in India, a knee replacement in Thailand with six days of physical therapy costs about one-fifth of what it would in the States, and Lasik eye surgery worth \$3,700 in the US is available in many other countries for only \$730.

While the prices of procedures abroad are enticing, many clinics quote costs that are not all-inclusive, and the quality of care is always a concern. There may also be ethical issues: the sources of transplants in countries like China may be ethically questionable.

The Medical Tourism Association, a professional association, is emerging in an effort to provide a source of information about hospitals and statistics on outcomes. It is also

important to check the credentials of the doctors and hospitals -- are the doctors accredited in the United States or the UK? Are the hospitals accredited by ISQua (International Society for Quality in HealthCare)?

See <http://www.medicaltravelauthority.com>

### **3) Pinnacle Chooses MedTral**

AUCKLAND, New Zealand & MARLBOROUGH, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Medtral New Zealand ([www.medtral.com](http://www.medtral.com)), providing, world-class, affordable healthcare, with all-inclusive travel and medical treatment packages, today announced a ground-breaking partnership with Pinnacle Health ([www.pinnaclehealth.com](http://www.pinnaclehealth.com)), a preferred provider organization providing network and administrative services to self-funded employers, with over 3,000 providers throughout America's Northeast.

According to Paul Brough, president and CEO of Pinnacle Health, "This relationship holds significant potential for both organizations. An attractive destination for medical care and surgery, New Zealand pushes all the right buttons for me. It's a first world, English-speaking country with very high quality medicine and a clean, green environment that is ideal for recuperation. Additionally, the quality and affordability of the travel and treatment packages is unparalleled. Our customers are now requesting options for medical travel, and New Zealand fits the bill."

Medtral New Zealand services include travel, accommodation, hospital procedures, and post-operative care at New Zealand's premier private medical facilities and contingency insurance. Adhering to Quality Health New Zealand (QHNZ) and International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua) accreditation standards, Medtral New Zealand's network of hospitals provide a world-class experience and service for North American patients.

"We are excited about the prospects of working with a forward-thinking organization like Pinnacle Health," says Steve Nichols, managing director of Medtral New Zealand. "This partnership offers an affordable and attractive option to Pinnacle clients and members, and makes sense for the self-funded employers that are considering medical travel options for their employees."

Nichols emphasizes that the option of medical travel to New Zealand will undoubtedly save Pinnacle member employers significant costs while ensuring the quality of the medical services.

"Patients get the chance to experience New Zealand and enjoy dedicated recovery time at potentially less personal cost than having the operation performed in the U.S.," adds Nichols.

#### **About Medtral New Zealand:**

Medtral New Zealand is the leading provider of medical travel in New Zealand for North American patients, providing world-class, non-acute care and treatment in some of the country's finest private hospitals. Headquartered in Auckland, New Zealand, Medtral New Zealand can be reached at +64 9 623 6588, or visit [www.medtral.com](http://www.medtral.com).

**About Pinnacle Health:**

Pinnacle Health is an organization that specifically targets the self-funded employer marketplace. Its providers - the physicians, hospitals, and other medically related entities - are in the best position to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of healthcare for the nation's employees. Pinnacle Health's philosophy reflects an emphasis on local delivery and local decision-making by the providers who live and practice in the communities of their patients. Additionally, they form partnerships between physicians, hospitals, and self-funded employers who encourage long-term control of the processes centered around local healthcare providers and capabilities developed to enhance the provider-patient relationship. Visit [www.pinnaclehealth.com](http://www.pinnaclehealth.com).