

U.S. patients find surgery deals overseas

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U.S. patients are increasingly going overseas for big savings on major surgeries, the American Medical Association said.

Medical tourism to countries like Mexico, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and India has surged as many of the 46 million people in the United States without health insurance look for affordable treatment, the Chicago Tribune said Friday.

The newspaper said India is becoming a top destination for patients seeking heart surgery, organ transplants and knee replacements. The AMA said major U.S. employers and insurers are looking at the potential for major cost savings by sending their workers to other countries for elective surgery.

"Major (insurers) and employers may soon follow in the footsteps of individuals," the medical association said in a report last year.

The AMA said prices offered to medical tourists are often 60 percent to 85 percent lower than in the United States, which offsets the cost of travel and first-class accommodations, the Tribune reported.

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