

## **RUBRIC “7 QUESTIONS FROM MINISTRY OF HEALTH ABOUT MEDICAL TOURISM”**

*To: Acting director of the National Medical and Research Center for Rehabilitation and Resort of the Ministry of Health of Russian Federation*

*Fesun Anatoly*

### **1. The federal project "Development of medical services export" of the Ministry of Health of Russian Federation has begun since 2019. What is the place of the international cooperation in your medical organization?**

The development of international cooperation is one of the important priorities for our institution. Many business meetings were held with representatives of foreign medical organizations to discuss the issues of international cooperation in 2019.

The member of the General Assembly of the FDI World Dental Federation for Public Health, prof. Edoardo Cavalle (Milan) and the President of the World Federation of Hydrotherapy and Climatotherapy (FEMTEC), prof. Umberto Solimene (Milan) visited the National Medical and Research Center for Rehabilitation and Resort. The opportunities of international scientific cooperation were discussed to plan the international joint scientific research, organize internships for young scientists and employees of the National Medical and Research Center for Rehabilitation and Resort in Italy.

The highlighted topic of this meeting was the organization of medical services export in the National Medical and Research Center for Rehabilitation and Resort for Italian citizens. Prof. Edoardo Cavalle supported this idea and considered the necessity for cooperation in this direction. Professor Edoardo Cavalla got acquainted with the unique modern equipment of the National Medical and Research Center for Rehabilitation and Resort, which is used for the diagnosis and medical rehabilitation of neurological, cardiological and orthopedic patients.

In October 2019, the foreign delegation consisted of neurologists, orthopedists and physicians from Bulgaria, Kuwait, Jordan, the Philippines, Spain, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Myanmar visited the National Medical and Research Center for Rehabilitation and Resort of the Ministry of Health of Russian Federation to get acquainted with the latest treatment and rehabilitation methods.

Also our employees make business trips abroad in order to establish international cooperation and make agreements with leading world-class medical institutions. In October-November 2019, the meetings were held with representatives of the University of Milan (Italy), the University of Padova (Italy), the Charite Clinical Complex (Germany); as the result agreements were concluded. As a part of this work, it is planned to conduct joint scientific research, publish in

international journals, participate in international grants, conferences, congresses, symposia, seminars and other scientific events; also it is planned to have exchanges of residents, graduate students, professors, lecturers between organizations.

**2. Does your medical organization have an increase of foreign patients in 2019 compared to 2017, and in your opinion with what factors it can be connected?**

Compared with 2017, the National Medical and Research Center for Rehabilitation and Resort of the Ministry of Health of Russian Federation has a significant increase in patients, including foreign ones. This is due to the development of the center itself; also there is a growing interaction with new insurance organizations. It is known that the cost of medical rehabilitation in the Russian Federation is much lower in comparison with other countries, but at the same time it is not inferior in the quality of medical services provided and in the variety of rehabilitation programs. Nowadays 20 foreign citizens have been provided with medical assistance at the National Medical and Research Center for Rehabilitation and Resort of the Ministry of Health of Russian Federation.

**3. What medical services in your organization are most in demand by foreign patients?**

Foreign patients are very interested in the methods of physical therapy with special Equipment presented at the Center, such as vacuum interference therapy, electrostatic pulsed therapy and general cryotherapy (cryosauna). These methods are successfully used in our country for diseases of the ligamentous-articular and musculoskeletal system, metabolic disorders.

Abroad, particular in the EU countries, physiotherapeutic treatment is not as popular among doctors as in Russia, it is not so actively studied and less commonly used. Thus, foreign patients are attracted by new non-invasive techniques that our specialists can offer.

The sanatorium-resort treatment that the National Medical and Research Center for Rehabilitation and Resort of the Ministry of Health of Russian Federation can always offer in its filial branches located in the Stavropol and Krasnodar Territories, remains in high demand because of well-developed infrastructure and its climatic conditions

**4. What opportunities can you see for your medical organization in the implementation of the federal project “Development of the medical services export” of the Russian Ministry of Health?**

The potential of the National Medical and Research Center for Rehabilitation and Resort of the Ministry of Health of Russian Federation with respect to medical

tourism and the export of medical services is quite large, primarily for bordering countries. This can be explained by the fact that in Russia, on average, the level of medical care is higher than in the CIS countries, and our Center is the leading institution in the Russian Federation with regard to medical rehabilitation and sanatorium-resort treatment.

The center has unique and modern equipment for mechanotherapy, physiotherapy, balneotherapy; the institution employs competent high-level specialists, and the cost of services is significantly lower than in Europe. These are the factors for the medical services export development.

#### **5. What features of working with foreign patients could you notice?**

When you assist foreign patients, medical personnel may have such problems like language barrier and cultural peculiarities. Therefore, medical personnel require more attention and involvement in a dialogue with patients in order to stay confident in needs of our foreign patients.

#### **6. Many foreign countries and their clinics spend great amount of resources on advertisement of their own brand. For the first time, in 2019, a federal communication campaign was started in the Russian Federation aimed at popularizing the medical services in Russia. How and why foreign patients choose your organization?**

Patients may find out the information about us according to the recommendations of patients who were hospitalized at our clinic, as well as from our employees.

#### **7. Can you name the most representative case of the medical services provision to a foreign citizen?**

The most interesting case was the patient from Kazakhstan with brain injury. Thanks to the professionalism of our doctors, the patient successfully completed a course of medical rehabilitation and improved his motor and speech functions.

#### **8. What are your competitive advantages in the field of medical tourism in Russia?**

The Russian Federation is a country rich in natural resources. First of all, it is our mineral springs and therapeutic mud that are not inferior to foreign ones. This is the Sol-Iletsky Lake in the Orenburg Region, the Big Yashalt Lake in the Republic of Kalmykia; their salt and mud resources are not inferior to the resorts of the Dead Sea.

As already mentioned, medical care in general and resort-spa treatment, in particular, are quite accessible, well developed and adequately functioning in our country. The relatively low cost of medical services creates favorable conditions

for attracting foreign patients not only from bordering countries, but also for citizens from Western Europe and Asia.