



دائرة الصحة
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DOH POLICY ON MEDICAL TOURISM IN THE EMIRATE OF ABU DHABI

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This document should be read in conjunction with related UAE laws, DOH Standards, Policies and Manuals.



ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH)

The Department of Health (DOH) is the regulative body of the Health System in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and seeks excellence in Health for the community by regulating and monitoring the health status of the population. DOH defines the strategy for the health system, monitors and analyses the health status of the population and performance of the system. In addition, DOH shapes the regulatory framework for the health system, inspects against regulations, enforce regulations, and encourages the adoption of best practices and performance targets by all health service providers. DOH also drives programs to increase awareness and adoption of healthy living standards among the residents of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in addition to regulating scope of services, premiums and reimbursement rates of the health system in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. The Health System of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi is comprehensive, encompasses the full spectrum of health services and is accessible to all residents of Abu Dhabi. The health system encompasses; providers, professionals, patients, insurers and the regulator. Providers of health services include public and private services and the system is financed through mandatory health insurance (with the exception to Thiqa) and has three main sources of financing: Employers or Sponsors, the Government and Individuals. The Health Insurance scheme places responsibilities on any Insurer, Broker, Third Party Administrator, Health Provider, Employer, Sponsor (including educational establishments), Limited Income Investors and Insured Persons to participate in the Health Insurance Scheme.



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The number of travelers visiting the UAE seeking medical services is growing. Considering these developments, DOH seeks to safeguard its mission of ensuring better access to services, continually improving quality of care, and sustainability of resources while ensuring that this form of tourism supports the country's strategy on economic diversification.

2. PURPOSE

2.1. The purpose of this policy is to support the growth of medical tourism in Abu Dhabi and ensure that the interests of all stakeholders in the Abu Dhabi healthcare system are safeguarded.

3. SCOPE

3.1. The scope of this policy is:

3.1.1. Healthcare providers;

3.1.2. Insurers and third-party payers;

3.1.3. Non-Abu Dhabi based nationals and residents who are interested in receiving medical treatment inside the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

3.2. This policy, therefore, excludes:

3.2.1. Treatment of nationals abroad;

3.2.2. Abu Dhabi-based Nationals and residents receiving treatment in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

4. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

4.1. Medical Tourism: Healthcare given to any UAE national or non-national not residing in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and getting non-emergency medical service in a healthcare facility licensed by Abu Dhabi Department of Health.

4.2. Abu Dhabi Medical Tourism Network: The Abu Dhabi Medical Tourism Network (ADMT) is a one-stop shop that links all the participating healthcare providers, travel, hospitality, medical travel insurance and visa services.

4.3. Medical Tourism Emergency Health Insurance Plan: A specialized health insurance product designed to cover emergency in-patient medical condition, accidents & liabilities. The specialized product covers hospital accommodation & services, consultant, surgeon & anesthetist's fees and other ambulance services, pharmaceuticals during hospitalization, physiotherapy during inpatient treatment & post-traumatic dental treatment. In addition, the product covers repatriation of mortal remains.

4.4. MT: Medical Tourism.

4.5. DOH: Department of Health Abu Dhabi.

4.6. KPIs: Key Performance Indicators.

4.7. IPAs: Third Party Administrators. Any company licensed to carry on insurance claims administration in the Emirate, such services including but not limited to claims management, claims review and



payment, claims utilization review, maintenance of adherent records (eligibility and medical follow up) and underwriting consultancy without carrying insurance risk¹.

5. VISION, GOAL AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

5.1. Vision

5.1.1. To develop Abu Dhabi as a central destination on the global medical tourism map, attracting medical tourists to its high-quality medical facilities and services that are supported by up-to-date medical technology, and facilitated by ease of travel.

5.2. Goal

5.2.1. The goal of this policy is to set the principles of DOH's approach to Medical Tourism and its strategic goals.

5.3. Guiding Principles

This policy shall be guided by the following principles:

5.3.1. Patients-centric model of care:

Where all patient's rights are safeguarded and where healthy and transparent partnership is established among practitioners, patients, and their families to align decisions with patients' needs, and preferences.

5.3.2. High quality and specialized healthcare services:

Central to this policy and its components is to obtain the best outcome of care.

5.3.3. Competitive provision of healthcare services and insurance:

Delivering high quality care in a cost-efficient and financially sustainable manner is central to this policy.

5.3.4. Evidence-based and forward-looking thinking strategy:

This policy and its implementation strategies shall be evidence-based, and must take into accounts emerging global trends, local experts' guidance, local requirements as well as local cultural and physical needs.

5.3.5. Context sensitive:

While considering evidence-based, best practices and existing medical tourism models, this policy and its implementation shall be driven by local and regional realities and priorities.

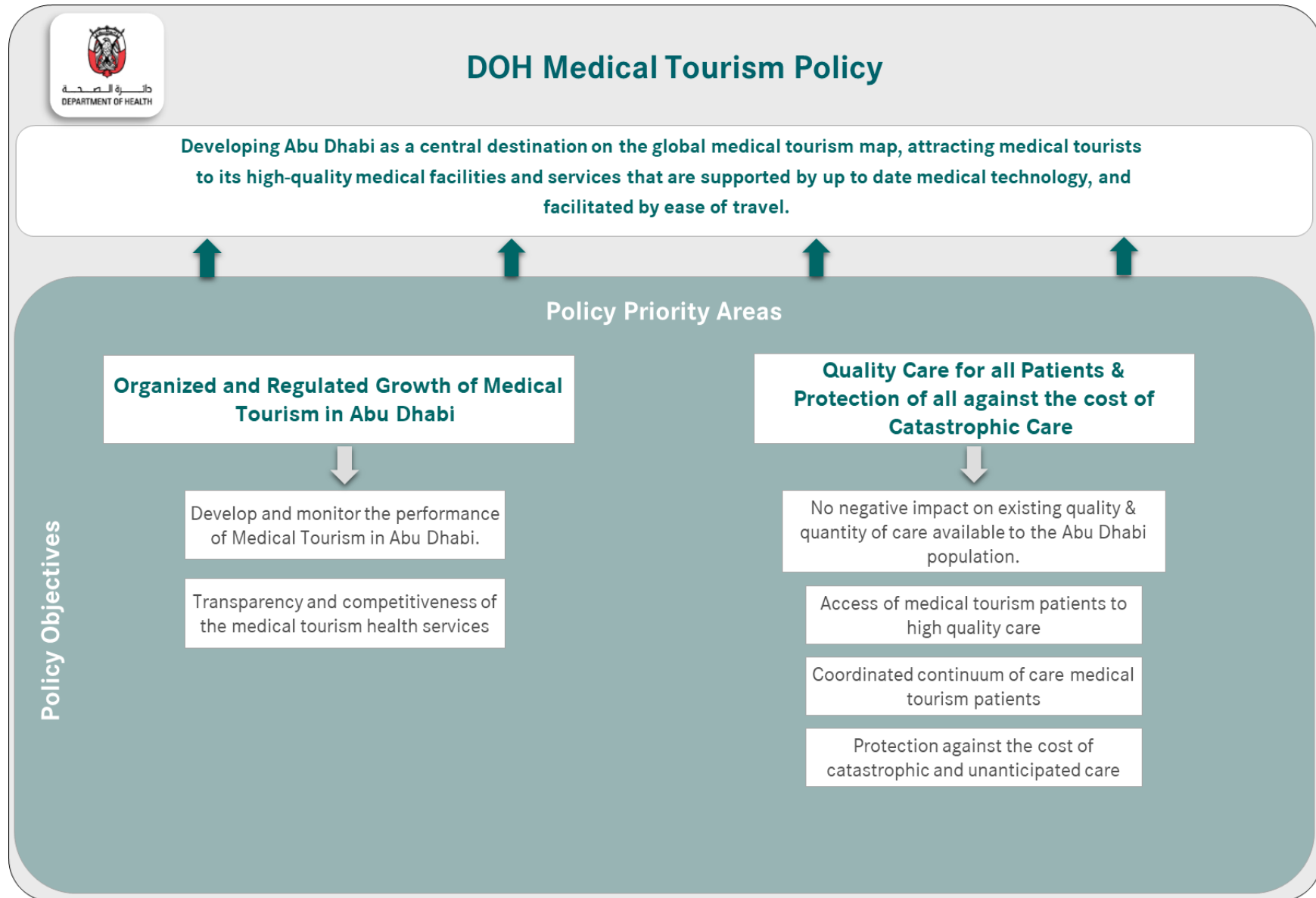
5.3.6. Partnership:

Regulators, payers, providers (public and the private sector), brokers and others shall be strategic partners driving the development and implementation of this pol

¹ https://www.doh.gov.ae/pdf/manuals/haad-insurers-manual-final-file_30dec12.pdf



Figure 1: Overview of the DOH Policy on Medical Tourism in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi





6. POLICY PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

In order to fulfil the vision and to achieve the purpose and goal of the Medical Tourism Policy DOH has outlined several specific policy objectives and strategies to achieve them:

6.1. Policy Priority 1: To Ensure an Organized and Regulated Growth of Medical Tourism in Abu Dhabi.

<p>Policy Statement: DOH seeks to formalize the growth of Medical Tourism in Abu Dhabi and ensure accountability of Providers.</p>
<p>Policy Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and monitor the performance of Medical Tourism in Abu Dhabi. 2. Ensure transparency and competitiveness of the medical tourism health services.

Objective 1: Develop and Monitor the performance of Medical Tourism in Abu Dhabi.

Strategy 1: Establish an Abu Dhabi Medical Tourism Program to develop, oversee and monitor the performance of a network of medical tourism healthcare providers.

6.1.1. In order to achieve this goal, DOH shall:

- 6.1.1.1. Set the program scope, components and KPIs;
- 6.1.1.2. Develop related regulatory documents;
- 6.1.1.3. Set the requirements for entry into the Abu Dhabi Network of Medical Tourism Providers including:
 - 6.1.1.3.1. Eligibility criteria and requirements to become a medical tourism provider and become part of the Abu Dhabi Network of Medical Tourism providers;
 - 6.1.1.3.2. Roles and responsibilities of providers with respect to the provision of care provided to medical tourists.

6.1.2. In order to achieve this goal, healthcare providers shall:

- 6.1.2.1. Comply with the requirement of the program and all relevant Federal Laws and DOH standards covering the provision of healthcare.

Objective 2: Ensure transparency and competitiveness of the medical tourism health services.

Strategy 2: Establish the Abu Dhabi Medical Tourism Network, with clear and publicly accessible membership requirements.

6.1.3. In order to achieve this goal, DOH shall:

- 6.1.3.1. Create an open medical tourism portal that addresses all the policies, regulations, and procedures related to medical tourism;
- 6.1.3.2. Open the provision of medical tourism to all healthcare and insurance providers that comply with the membership criteria;

6.1.4. In order to achieve this goal, healthcare providers & insurance providers shall:

- 6.1.4.1. Provide the required information and fill the required forms to join Abu Dhabi medical tourism network;



6.1.4.2. Attend all related training workshops conducted by the DoH or any of its strategic partners.

6.2. Policy Priority 2: To Ensure the Quality of Care for all Patients and Protection of Patients and Providers against Catastrophic Care.

Policy Statement:

DOH seeks to ensure that the interests of all relevant stakeholders in the Abu Dhabi healthcare system are safe guarded.

Policy Objectives:

3. Ensure that medical tourism must not negatively affect existing quality and quantity of care available to the Abu Dhabi population.
4. Ensure that medical tourism patients have access to high quality care.
5. Ensure that medical tourism patients receive coordinated and continuum care.
6. Protect Medical tourists and providers from the cost of catastrophic and unanticipated care.

Objective 3: Ensure that medical tourism does not negatively impact the existing quality and quantity of healthcare available to the Abu Dhabi community.

Strategy 3: Limit the Abu Dhabi Medical Tourism Network to the service lines that meet Abu Dhabi-based capacity criteria to avoid any pressures on existing healthcare services.

6.2.1. In order to achieve this goal, DOH shall:

- 6.2.1.1. Develop and regularly review capacity-based criteria to determine the service lines to be included in Medical Tourism packages;
- 6.2.1.2. Authorize only those Medical Tourism packages that satisfy the capacity requirements.

6.2.2. In order to achieve this, healthcare providers shall:

- 6.2.2.1. Include only the approved service lines in their Medical Tourism packages;
- 6.2.2.2. Provide DOH with all requested medical tourism-related data and metrics to monitor service line capacity for Medical Tourism.

Objective 4: Ensure that medical tourism patients have access to high quality care.

Strategy 4.1: Formalize the Abu Dhabi Medical Tourism Network as the official provider of the medical tourism services.

6.2.3. In order to achieve this goal, DOH shall:

- 6.2.3.1. Develop and regularly review inclusion requirements and selection criteria that are based on, but not limited to, healthcare quality indicators;
- 6.2.3.2. Select only facilities that comply with and satisfy DOH quality requirements, and suspend or terminate membership of those who are non-compliant with these requirements;
- 6.2.3.3. Regularly monitor the quality of care provided by Abu Dhabi medical tourism network member providers.

6.2.4. In order to achieve this goal, healthcare providers shall:

- 6.2.4.1. Provide DOH with all data and metrics to related to DOH quality indicators regularly and as requested;



Strategy 4.2: Ensure that medical tourists receive all information related to their care and treatment as medical tourists.

6.2.5. In order to achieve this goal, DOH shall:

6.2.5.1. Regularly update healthcare providers in the MT network on addition of any new requirements with respect to the obligations of MT providers.

6.2.6. In order to achieve this goal, Medical Tourism providers shall:

6.2.6.1. Provide information and guidance to the medical tourism patient regarding the expected treatment and medical journey.

Objective 5: Ensure that medical tourism patients receive integrated and coordinated continuum of care.

Strategy 5: Ensure the provision of coordinated and continuum of care requirements as per the set criteria of DOH and of the Abu Dhabi medical tourism network.

6.2.7. In order to achieve this goal, DOH shall:

6.2.7.1. Include the provision of a continuum of care mechanisms among the inclusion requirements and selection criteria providers in the Abu Dhabi medical tourism network.

6.2.8. In order to achieve this goal, healthcare providers shall:

6.2.8.1. Comply with all DOH regulations on continuum of care requirements as elaborated in the Regulator Manual to become a provider within the Abu Dhabi Medical Tourism Network.

Objective 6: Protect Medical tourists and providers from the cost of catastrophic and unanticipated cases.

Strategy 6: Introduction of “Medical Tourism” or other customized insurance packages.

6.2.9. In order to achieve this goal, DOH shall:

6.2.9.1. Work with the relevant authorities to mandate the requirement for medical tourists to purchase “medical tourist” insurance.

6.2.10. In order to achieve this goal, healthcare providers shall:

6.2.10.1. Inform potential medical tourists seeking their services of the insurance requirement.

6.2.11. In order to achieve this, Insurers and TPAs shall:

6.2.11.1. Provide medical tourism or equivalent insurance packages.

7. Enforcement and Compliance

7.1. DOH will enforce the compliance of all concerned stakeholders with this Policy. DOH may impose sanctions in relation to any breach of requirements under this Policy in accordance with the Chapter on Complaints, Investigations, Regulatory Action and Sanctions, The Healthcare Regulator Manual.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1. A monitoring and evaluation framework involving healthcare providers, insurers and the regulator will be developed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Policy, and where necessary, adopt changes to ensure continuous improvement within the health system.