

Patients considering medical tourism may benefit from industry research.

In the [Allentown \(PA\) Morning Call](#) (12/14) Spending Smart blog, Gregory Karp wrote that "medical travel, sometimes called medical tourism, can be a huge money saver for quality surgical procedures," and "a wise choice, especially in recessionary times." In addition, "WellPoint Inc. recently announced a pilot program that would provide coverage for group members to travel to India for certain non-emergency procedures, such as joint replacement." Karp noted that patients who "don't have health insurance, have a high deductible or want a procedure not covered by health insurance," and "need non-emergency surgery...could save thousands of dollars by having a procedure done outside the United States." With regard to the quality of care abroad, Karp explained that "it can be excellent, on par with procedures completed in the United States, with equally sophisticated equipment and qualified doctors." Still, he urged patients to research the medical travel industry and speak "with representatives of overseas hospitals and former medical travel patients."