

Wellpoint begins pilot program giving covered patients the option of having elective surgery in India.

The [New York Times](#) (11/21, Rabin) reported that health insurer Wellpoint has begun a pilot program that "gives covered patients the option of going to India for elective surgery, with no out-of-pocket medical costs and free travel for both the patient and a companion." Currently, the "program is being tested at Serigraph, a printing company in Wisconsin whose managers have been looking for ways to curb rising healthcare costs," explained Dr. Razia Hashmi, "chief medical officer for national accounts for Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, which is affiliated with Wellpoint." The pilot "program complies with the American Medical Association guidelines on medical tourism and uses hospitals accredited by the Joint Commission International." Dr. Hashmi said that "the program could potentially help keep insurance premiums affordable." In two years, "more than six million Americans annually will be seeking medical treatment abroad, according to the Deloitte Center for Health Solutio