

# Medical Travel Today

## SPOTLIGHT

Skip Brickley

Transmarx, LLC, is providing the leading platforms for exploring and understanding how the convergence of consumerism, economics, policy, and technologies are transforming the delivery cost and quality of healthcare in the United States and globally. Transmarx provides forums for discussions regarding the need to find solutions for improving the health of individuals.

*Medical Travel Today* recently spoke with Skip Brickley, director of The Medical Travel RoadShow and Your Health Expos for Transmarx, LLC, regarding the 2009 series of medical travel expos to be held in cities across the country.

**Medical Travel Today (MTT):** *What inspired the Medical Travel RoadShow and Your Health Expos, and what is their purpose?*

**Skip Brickley (SB):** The expos came as a result of our business-to-business Consumer Health World Conference, which provided focus on how consumerism is pushing the healthcare delivery system to provide more choice, cost reduction, greater access, and accurate information for the consumer/patient. As a logical extension of these programs, we were motivated to provide to consumers the ability to physically and virtually connect with health and travel options through our consumer expos and Web site. The emergence of world class medical care in foreign destinations benefits the consumer by allowing greater choice and affordable prices. We see a direct relationship with consumers taking charge of personal health and exploring their health and care options. The expos will also allow international medical providers a showcase for their medical capabilities and tourism appeal in their host countries. It is no accident that many of the more affluent U.S. citizens travel outside of the United States for many of their medical procedures. We feel that the opportunity for international care will be an option for many low to middle income Americans and believe our expos will be a great source for consumers to explore and engage those options.



Skip Brickley  
Director, The Medical Travel  
RoadShow and Your Health  
Expos for Transmarx, LLC

**MTT:** *Who is your primary audience for these expos?*

**SB:** Today, consumers who have adequate health insurance will typically travel abroad for elective non-insurance covered healthcare. Our consumer expos are geared toward individuals who use their own resources to pay for healthcare, either because they are self-insured or underinsured, or they are seeking elective or other procedures that their insurance doesn't cover. Certainly they are looking for the highest quality of care at prices substantially below those in the United States. This age demographic will likely be from 40 to 70 years of age. Also, while affluence is not the most important measure, some indication of ability to pay for services, such as household income or net worth, is important. Also, we think individuals who are managing chronic health conditions are more likely to be looking for affordable solutions. Self-employed individuals are also an important segment of our audience, and we feel they would benefit greatly from international care access.

**MTT:** *Why should employers consider sending their employees to one of your expos?*

**SB:** As employers and employees are understanding the short and long term benefits of a healthy life style, we offer employees the ability to examine first-hand what options are available to them to improve their health. Clearly, it would make sense for human resources and benefits executives to gain exposure to and insight from medical travel provisions as part of the company's health plan benefits, especially if that employer is already investigating or considering including medical travel benefits.

**MTT:** *Has this kind of national medical travel expo tour ever been done before?*

**SB:** To my knowledge, no one has undertaken a national schedule of medical travel expos. While there are some consumer health expos out there, we are not aware of any related to medical tourism, although I am aware of an event in Seattle last year that we understand attracted about 8,000 visitors to a medical tourism expo.

**MTT:** *How did you go about choosing the cities for your expo tour?*

**SB:** While not an exact science, we looked at markets with relatively high household income, high average education, diverse population -- including Asian and Hispanic concentrations of workers and households -- technology centers, significant levels of uninsured households, and enough population from which to attract visitors. Initially, we are focusing on border states/markets (like Texas, California, Florida, and others), places from which foreign travel is a bit more convenient. We also have paired markets with back-to-back weekend expos in an effort to minimize travel and logistics for the international exhibitors.

**MTT:** *What can consumer expo visitors expect to gain?*

**SB:** We believe that consumers have a genuine desire and need to learn more about their health options and how they can benefit from international care. For everyone this will be a convenient "up close and personal" introduction to medical travel and personal health options. We believe the convenience of expos being in or near their home town will be a real draw for visitors.

**MTT:** *What does Transmarx hope to gain from this national tour of expos?*

**SB:** By bringing in the very best local and international providers of health and travel services and solutions to the consumer in each region, we hope to attract between 3,000 to 6,000 attendees.

**MTT:** *In what way do the Medical Travel RoadShow and Your Health Expos tie into the upcoming elections?*

**SB:** We feel that by learning more about healthcare options and becoming a more informed healthcare consumer, individuals will gain insight and be able to make better decisions on the type of healthcare system we have today and our ability to access quality affordable care. This kind of knowledge will aid the evaluation of those representing our healthcare values when the time comes to elect this country's leaders.

**About Skip Brickley** Skip Brickley has been creating industry-leading conferences since 1993 when he produced and managed conferences for Adweek Magazines. His focus has always been on identifying trends and issues that have the power to transform the way an industry does business and goes to market. In the mid 1990s, Skip's firm, eMarketWorld, created and produced leading conferences in a number of industry sectors including healthcare (eHealthcareWorld); Marketing, Advertising & Publishing (@d:tech); as well as Travel, Financial Services, Entertainment, Automotive, and others. EMarketWorld events were held in the U.S., London, Amsterdam, and Latin America.