

Healthcare leaders seek lessons from Thai hospital



Following his recent presentation to CEOs from world-renowned teaching hospitals, Bumrungrad's retiring Group CEO Curtis Schroeder sat down with Better Health to share his insights on the changes affecting healthcare delivery around the world.

Earlier this year, the U.S.-based Counsel of Teaching Hospitals and Health Systems (COH) invited Curt Schroeder to be the “disruptive keynote speaker” at their Spring meeting. The disruptive keynote speaker is chosen from a company or organization making an unexpected impact or leading an important trend in the delivery of medical care.

Curt gave the hundreds of healthcare leaders in his audience an insightful look at Bumrungrad's success. And he made some surprising discoveries about how quickly global healthcare has evolved, and how the world sees Bumrungrad's role in the transformation.

Far from home, surprisingly well known

“As I got up in front of the large group of hospital CEOs and administrators, the first thing I did was to ask for a show of hands of those in the audience who were familiar with Bumrungrad before seeing our name on the agenda. Almost every hand in the room went up!

With all the hospitals in the world, to have most people know the name of a foreign hospital would be impressive. But to have nearly the entire audience know about a hospital from Thailand, with a name that's hard to pronounce, that was truly surprising. When I got the chance to talk one-on-one with some of the executives, I was really surprised at how much they knew about Bumrungrad.”

The real story on medical tourism

“I included an update on medical tourism since many in the audience run hospitals that attract large numbers of medical tourists to the U.S. I wanted to cut through the media hype that tends to portray medical tourism as a fad among people intrigued by the concept of combining a beach holiday and a face lift in one vacation.

The reality is that medical tourism has grown into a major sector of the global healthcare industry; it now enjoys wide acceptance among consumers and the healthcare industry; its

economics are extremely compelling; and today's medical tourists travel for complex procedures like open heart surgery or advanced radiation therapy.

In my many years at Bumrungrad, I've spoken to literally thousands of medical tourists, and not one of them ever mentioned anything about going on a beach holiday.”

A source of Thai pride

“I wish every Thai could get to see how much respect and admiration the international community holds for what the Thai people have accomplished at a hospital like Bumrungrad. Every day people leave their own country, travel thousands of miles, and enjoy international standard medical care from outstanding doctors, for significantly less money.

In my talk I told the group about a more recent Bumrungrad phenomenon: hospital tours. We now get so many calls from overseas groups asking for a tour of Bumrungrad. We've already given tours to literally thousands of people who have heard about all the great things going on here, and they come to Thailand to see in person what we're doing and how we're doing it so well.”



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The Bumrungrad standard

“I shared my thoughts on what might be spurring Bumrungrad's growth in medical tourists coming from the U.S. This was an important issue for the audience — they run many of the world's best hospitals, yet some of their patients are opting for Bumrungrad or elsewhere overseas, and their patients come back with almost all positive experiences and high levels of satisfaction about their decision and the cost savings.

It was surprising to hear that Bumrungrad is being used as a standard to compare their own performance, and they are looking for ways to offer a Bumrungrad-type experience to keep their patients from venturing overseas.

What a great feeling, and a very humbling experience, too.” 