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MEDEXODYSSEY

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



On behalf of MEDEX Global Group, welcome to the first print edition of MEDEX Odyssey. We hope you will enjoy our new publication, enhanced to bring you more travel advice, global health & security updates and information about MEDEX programs & services of special interest to our clients.

You'll read about MEDEX facilities in remote parts of the world and well-traveled regions, and learn simple ways to make your journeys even more safe and secure. We'll also provide up-to-date information on health topics and trends. We welcome your feedback and suggestions for future newsletter content, so please feel free to send us your thoughts and ideas to editor@medexassist.com.

For more than 28 years, MEDEX has been at the forefront of the international travel assistance industry. We have operated with one simple purpose—to help travelers in need. Nothing has altered our mission for 28 years, a remarkable legacy.

As always, I want to express my appreciation to our clients and strategic partners for MEDEX's continued success. Thanks to your support, MEDEX has enjoyed another successful year of growth. We continue to be committed to making your experience with us a good one.

Finally, I want to urge continued support for tsunami victims, so that they can move out of temporary shelters and rebuild their homes and communities. Learn how you can help through JHPIEGO (www.jhpiego.org), Habitat for Humanity International (www.habitat.org) and USAID (www.usaid.gov).

Yours in good health,

Bruce R. Kirby
President and CEO

DESTINATION: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Travel Boom Prompts New MEDEX Site Survey

A significant increase in MEDEX cases in recent years among travelers to the Dominican Republic, especially Santo Domingo, reflects that country's growing popularity as a business and tourist destination. MEDEX Assistance cases jumped 30 percent from 2002 to 2003 and 45 percent from 2003 to 2004. According to the Dominican Republic's National Association of Hotels and Restaurants, tourism grew 4.5 percent in 2004, with an average hotel occupancy rate of 74.2 percent.

The tourism boom has led to new hotel and convention center construction, as the Dominican Republic seeks to become a major conference site for organizations. Concerns about civil unrest in neighboring Haiti have abated; however, travelers should check with the U.S. State Department's Consular Information Sheet on the Dominican Republic for up-to-date information on entry and exit requirements, safety, and other issues. (Go to <http://travel.state.gov> and click on Consular Information Sheets.)

In anticipation of a continued increase in cases in 2005, especially during spring break, MEDEX's Director of Provider Relations conducted a site visit last year to Santo Domingo, Punta Cana, La Romana, Puerto Plata, and other popular destinations where most cases have occurred. The purpose was to strengthen ties with institutions in the region and ensure patient referrals to the most appropriate facilities for specialized care.



MEDEX Assistance cases jumped 30 percent from 2002 to 2003 and 45 percent from 2003 to 2004.

The MEDEX network in the Dominican Republic includes more than 150 providers, including 6 Regional Gateway Hospitals and 8 preferred physicians and surgeons.





U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT: MIDDLE EAST CAUTION UPDATE

The U.S. State Department has renewed its warning about the possibility of violent actions against U.S. citizens and interests in the Middle East. The caution notes that anti-American violence could include “possible terrorist actions against aviation, ground transportation and maritime interests,” in the area, including in the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa.

The announcement states that “extremists may be planning to carry out attacks against Westerners and oil workers in the Gulf region,” and warns that extremists may be “surveilling Westerners, particularly at hotels, housing areas and rental car facilities.” Potential targets may include U.S. contractors, particularly those related to military interests.

The Department further explains that terrorists “do not distinguish between official and civilian targets” and that “increased security at official U.S. facilities has led terrorists and their sympathizers to seek softer targets such as public transportation, residential areas and public areas where people congregate, including restaurants, hotels, clubs and shopping areas.”



On occasion, the Department may recommend that U.S. citizens avoid travel near certain U.S. embassies and consulates. Such recommendations are issued in times of heightened security, resulting in restricted movement by official personnel. If services to U.S. citizens abroad are affected by the restricted movement of official personnel, U.S. embassies and consulates will make every effort to provide emergency services. The Department advises U.S. citizens in need of such assistance to telephone the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate before visiting in person.

In addition, MEDEX Assistance urges USAID contractors, NGOs and other clients in the Middle East to remind travelers that emergency security assistance services are included in their MEDEX program.

REAL MEDEX CASE: SECURITY

Emergency Security Evacuation from Civil Unrest in Madagascar

Call Comes in to MEDEX Assistance: The HR Director of an international hotel chain is concerned about one of his employees, an expatriate working in Madagascar, where he lives with his wife and one-year-old daughter.

Emergency Security Situation: Violent demonstrations have broken out in Antananarivo, the capital, following a presidential election. The phone lines at the hotel where the employee works have been cut, and a person has been killed in front of the building. The employee’s attempts to book a flight failed. He can only communicate with the outside world through his cell phone.

MEDEX Intelligence Analysis: MEDEX Assistance Coordinators confirm that, though the closest airport is open, flight operations have been disrupted. The roads in and out of the city have been blockaded, and public transportation has been crippled by strikes. The Central Bank is closed, and the local currency is no longer convertible.

Security Situation Assessment: MEDEX, in consultation with the employer, the employee and specialized security resources, decides that the

employee’s wife and daughter should be evacuated to nearby Mauritius and then repatriated back home. The employee is considered “essential personnel,” so he is advised to remain at the hotel and stay securely away from the demonstrations.

Emergency Security Evacuation: In just a few hours, MEDEX Assistance Coordinators secure seats for a flight the next day (one day before new visa requirements are imposed to curb the influx of people leaving Madagascar) and monitor the family’s safe ground transportation to the airport. An open-ended ticket is provided to the employee, should his situation change.

Confirmed Evacuation & Ongoing Monitoring: MEDEX Assistance Coordinators monitor the wife and daughter’s evacuation, confirming their safe arrival and updating both the employee and employer. In the following months of continued civil unrest, MEDEX performs regular monitoring of the security situation in Madagascar and keeps in touch with all involved.

Case Closed: When conditions return to a safer state, MEDEX arranges for the family to be reunited in Antananarivo.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MEDEX will have a presence at the following upcoming conferences. If you are attending any of these events, be sure to stop by the MEDEX booth to say hello.

Society of Human Resources and Management (SHRM) Global Forum

April 11-13, 2005
Hilton Chicago
Chicago, Illinois
Booth #211

Risk and Insurance Management Society (RIMS)

April 17-21, 2005
Pennsylvania Convention Center
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Booth #243

World Trade Center Institute Embassy Day

May 19, 2005
Bethesda North Marriott,
Hotel and Conference Center
Bethesda, Maryland

NAFSA Association of International Educators

May 29-June 3, 2005
Washington State Convention & Trade Center
Seattle, Washington
Booth #908

SPOTLIGHT ON... HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Since 1976, Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) has built more than 175,000 houses, providing shelter for nearly one million people worldwide. Now at work in 100 countries, HFHI builds a new house every 26 minutes. MEDEX provides assistance to Habitat's international volunteers and U.S. employees stationed around the world.

HFHI describes itself as "a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry." Its mission is to build simple, decent, affordable houses in partnership with families who lack adequate shelter. It seeks to eliminate poverty, housing and homelessness and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action.

Through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials, Habitat builds and rehabilitates houses with the help of the homeowner families, who invest hundreds of hours of their own labor in helping to build their Habitat house and those of others. Habitat houses are sold to partner families at no profit, financed with affordable, no-interest loans. The homeowners' monthly mortgage payments are used to build still more Habitat houses.

While Habitat efforts existed in Southeast Asia for more than a decade before the recent, devastating tsunami, Habitat has expanded their work with their local offices and international partner organizations to help families in the affected regions rebuild their homes and lives.



"MEDEX arranged and coordinated everything; the selection of a hospital, appointment and consultation with the doctors. They chose Gleneagles Hospital in Singapore and we got the best doctors in Singapore. They communicated to the doctors that attended to my son and communicated to me everyday through email. MEDEX was our strong and ready companion when we needed help."

- Tommy Pacatang Habitat Employee - Jakarta, Indonesia

WORLD TRAVEL NEWS

Lighters Added to Prohibited Items List

As of April 14, 2005, travelers will no longer be allowed to bring lighters past security points at U.S. airports, in their carry-on luggage or on their person.

The U.S. Transportation Security Administration is adding all lighters to the Prohibited Items List to reduce a security vulnerability and ease the operational challenge of distinguishing between different types of lighters. Passengers will still be allowed to bring up to four books of matches beyond the checkpoint.



▲ Christian shortly after his second birthday

▲ Christian Paul Pacatang was one year old when he underwent open heart surgery for a hole in his heart.

HFHI'S GLOBAL VILLAGE PROGRAM BUILDING HOMES, BUILDING HOPE WORLDWIDE

This year, at least 500 teams, each with about 12 to 15 volunteers, will travel to 30 different countries to learn about poverty and homelessness; work with people of all backgrounds, races and religions; develop new skills; and learn about a community's culture, language, and social practices. For many, it will be a life-changing experience.

The Global Village program gives participants the opportunity to observe and contribute to Habitat's international projects firsthand. Working alongside homeowners and local volunteers, they help to build a true "global village" of community and hope. Itineraries are balanced with work, rest, and free time. More and more families are participating; for example, in August 2004, five family groups were connected with families in Mexico who were working to build their own homes.



Because construction work, as well as international travel, is not without risk, HFHI works with MEDEX to ensure that treatment and transportation are available, if needed.

"It is a real comfort to our volunteers to know that if they need medical attention, MEDEX is prepared to help," said David Minich, Director of the Global Village program.

MEDEX SECURE

Ask your MEDEX Account Manager or Sales Director about how you can protect travelers from civil unrest or other emergency security situations. To find out more about group programs, call 800-573-2029 and ask to speak to a Sales Director.

TRAVEL HEALTH STATISTIC

Top 5 Medical Assistance Case Types*

- 1) Musculoskeletal (16%)
- 2) Gastrointestinal (14%)
- 3) Ear/Nose/Throat (11%)
- 4) Infectious Disorders (11%)
- 5) Cardiovascular (9%)

* based on MEDEX Assistance medical cases in 2004