

Healthcare > Why India should be a second choice

# Kenya sets sights on the medical tourist

Private and public players call for central online portal where special services will be posted

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Public and private medical stakeholders are pushing for setting up of a central online information portal to market available specialised services to locals and attract foreign medical tourists.

The International Health Conference held in Nairobi heard that Kenya has many unique services and specialist surgeons but lack of information makes many locals pay hefty costs to hospitals in India for services available at public and private ones here.

Kenyatta National Hospital acting deputy director Clinical Services Bernard Githae said renal services, equipment and specialist were available here but many patients kept flying to India for them.

"Kenyans continue to rely on oral doctor-to-doctor referrals for lack of a centralised information system to inform our people what individual

hospitals offer, their costs and available surgeons. Some hospitals rely on the same medical specialists but costs differ based on the target market by individual hospitals," he said.

The director of Vision 2030 Secretariat, General Julius Muia, said the board would allocate some funds for establishment of the portal and also fund a survey to gauge local facilities' preparedness in terms of equipment and human personnel.

### Build training hubs

"We need to identify the hospitals as per their specialty and competence. The study will help create a standard practice on establishment of hospitals across Kenya based on specialties to build training hubs for various ailments," he said.

Kenya Healthcare Federation Chairman Amit Thakker said a joint private-public collaboration and competition on delivery of services was important to grow Kenya's niche in medical travel.

"Let us have a neutral database that will act as a basis for referrals instead on consistent oral referrals," he said.

The one-day forum heard that Kenya could not afford to ignore application of information technology in healthcare management processes.

Nutritionist Linah Njoroge said most ailments could be avoided and medical costs reduced if Kenya promoted the wellness industry urgently.

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Julius Muia, director of Vision 2030 Secretariat



DIANA NGILA | NATION

Jubilee Holdings Chairman Nizar Juma (right) and the firm's executive officer Patrick Tumbo during the firm's annual general meeting at the Nairobi Serena Hotel yesterday. The insurer received shareholder ap-