

# Boletín Internacional



An information update for the members of the International Physicians Panel

September 2010

## Methodist Healthcare establishes an International Services office in Mexico City

International Services has opened an office in Mexico City and has named Dr. Luis Miguel Vidal as director for Mexico and Latin America. With 20 years of experience in Mexico's insurance industry Dr. Vidal's most recent position was as the Network Development and Medical Director for GNP



*Dr. Luis Miguel Vidal, Director for Mexico and Latin America*

(Grupo Nacional Provincial) the largest and most respected insurance provider in the country. His knowledge and insights on the business practices and criteria used to establish agreements with U.S. based hospitals for the referral of international patients was a determining factor in the decision to hire Dr. Vidal as the Methodist Healthcare representative in Mexico City.

Dr. Vidal's primary responsibility is to negotiate and establish contractual arrangements with Mexico's premier health insurance providers. These

providers offer international coverage to their policyholders, and many of the policyholders seek specialized treatment in the United States. In addition, Dr. Vidal will be facilitating insurance authorization, claims reconciliation and coordination of payments between the insurance providers and Methodist

Healthcare facilities. Aside from working directly with the insurance companies Dr. Vidal has established a mutually beneficial relationship with the AMASFAC (Mexico's health insurance agent association) who have confided in him are responsible for recommending and referring almost 70% of their policyholders with international insurance policies seeking healthcare in the U.S.

Dr. Vidal has also taken an active role in managing and strengthening ties with prominent stakeholders of Methodist Healthcare based in Mexico

that include: governmental officials, prominent communities and affiliated hospitals. "Dr. Vidal has made substantial progress in our commitment to maximize our existing relationships and establishing new ties with Mexico's premier health insurance providers," said Ralph Foster II, director of International Services. "This market includes an estimated 1.5 million insurance policyholders and 200,000 self-insured clients in the Financial Services sector."

Through the work of International Services, Methodist Healthcare has signed contracts or letters of intent with 63% of the insurance payors and 91% of the banks. Methodist Healthcare recently finalized a contract with Sinergia Médica, which accounts for 20 percent of the market. Negotiations are underway with Metlife (21% of the market), AXA (14% of the market), Monterrey Aetna (10% of the market) and Vitamedica (8% of the market).



## Methodist Healthcare signs contract with Sinergia Médica

Methodist Healthcare has finalized a contract with Sinergia Médica that incorporates Methodist Healthcare into the Sinergia Médica network, enabling Sinergia Médica patients with international policies to use Methodist Healthcare as a provider.

"One of the benefits of the new contract to patients is the direct billing arrangement between insurance and hospital,

making services more accessible to patients," said Ralph Foster II, director of International Services. "Patients will no longer have to pay out-of-pocket and seek reimbursement from their insurance company."

Foster and Dr. Luis Vidal, director of International Services in Mexico and Latin America, traveled to Mexico City in April to finalize negotiations and sign the contract.



## Director of Methodist International Services delivers keynote address at 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the Spanish Hospital Group



Ralph Foster II, director of International Services, delivered the keynote address at the 21st annual conference of the Spanish Hospital Group.

The conference was held and hosted in Veracruz, Mexico. Foster's presentation focused on healthcare trends, including HIT, patient safety and quality, transparency, and competition. The presentation also highlighted Methodist Healthcare's

successful implementation of quality and patient safety programs as well as Methodist Excellence and the cultural transformation toward excellence in healthcare. The opportunity to present information on these relevant topics to hospital administrators, board members and medical directors of affiliated hospitals reinforced existing collaboration and opportunities to enhance mutually beneficial programs and initiatives.

The annual conference is attended by the seven member facilities located in Mexico City, Pachuca, Torreón, San Luis Potosí, Puebla, Tampico, and Veracruz. The conference is an opportunity for the facilities to compare hospital performance measures and results of improvement programs implemented by the group.

Methodist Healthcare International Services is the only foreign hospital invited to participate in the meetings. Methodist Healthcare was first invited to attend the annual meeting of the group eight years ago when Methodist had an affiliation agreement with one of the hospitals. Currently Methodist Healthcare has affiliations with six of the seven hospitals.

## Methodist Healthcare signs affiliation agreement with Hospital Angeles del Pedregal

Methodist Healthcare has signed an affiliation agreement with Hospital Angeles del Pedregal, one of Mexico's largest private hospitals with 250 beds.

"Hospital Angeles de Pedregal is one of the most respected hospitals in Mexico and one of the best in all of Latin America," said Ralph Foster II, director of International Services. "Hospital officials there said they felt that our geographic proximity, cultural similarities and awareness would be conducive to ongoing communication and opportunities for collaboration on many subjects, including physician exchange and interaction, patient safety and quality programs,

medical tourism, and many others."

Foster signed the affiliation agreement in Mexico City in April.

In the mid-1980s, the facility was at one time the Humana Hospital in Mexico City. Officials there several years ago had expressed an interest in collaborating with Methodist Healthcare, but instead opted to affiliate with the Cleveland Clinic. The affiliation with the Cleveland Clinic did not meet their expectations, and after a visit by Dr. Luis Miguel Vidal, Methodist



Healthcare director of International Services for Mexico and Latin America, interest in an affiliation agreement with Methodist Healthcare re-surfaced.



## Methodist Healthcare launches the most comprehensive Language Services Program in the region

Methodist Healthcare has awarded Language Services Associates (LSA) an exclusive three-year contract for interpretation and translation services.

Awarding of the contract follows a successful pilot program conducted at three Methodist hospitals. Methodist Healthcare was one of a select group of HCA hospitals that was selected nationwide, due to the extensive research conducted in selecting a language services provider and the fact that San Antonio has a high percentage of LEP (limited English proficiency) patients. The need to upgrade our language services became evident after conducting surveys of our physicians, nurses and staff revealed that opportunities existed to improve communication with patients and enhance satisfaction levels.

Because different patient scenarios may warrant alternative platforms in order to enhance communication LSA offers dual-handset telephone, video, and on-site interpreters to better meet the needs of patients and healthcare providers.

Methodist Healthcare serves a diverse population in South Texas and has successfully implemented the service for interpreting medical information for patients with limited English-speaking abilities. The top five languages requested during the pilot stage were Spanish, Burmese, American Sign Language, Arabic and Swahili.

LSA received the contract because of its full suite of language solutions, enhanced responsiveness, level of quality, interpreter training protocols and certification, as well

as, overall cost-effectiveness. "Language services are an effective tool in expediting the care of our patients," said Ralph Foster II, director of International Services. "Our staff can obtain detailed information quickly, avoiding previous delays of one to two hours."

As an active language services provider in the health care field, LSA is proud to continue facilitating foreign language communication in the hospital setting. "We are extremely pleased that Methodist Healthcare has decided to award us with this exclusive three-year contract for interpretation and translation services," said Laura Schriver, CEO and President, LSA. "We look forward to continuing to serve the non-English speaking patients of Methodist Healthcare."

## Methodist International Services attends Monte Sinai Jewish Community Health Fair in Mexico City



SOCIEDAD DE BENEFICENCIA ALIANZA MONTE SINAI, I.A.P.

Methodist Healthcare participated in the Alianza Monte Sinai health fair, organized by one of the largest Jewish communities in Mexico City. It was the ninth consecutive year Methodist Healthcare has been invited to attend. Methodist Healthcare joined by an elite list of U.S. hospitals who also welcome the opportunity to attend which include: St. Lukes Episcopal in Houston, Cedar Sinai in Los Angeles, and the Mayo Clinic.

Approximately 3,500 people attended the health fair this past year, allowing Methodist Healthcare the opportunity

to promote its medical services and enroll visitors in the Methodist Healthcare !Viva! membership program. Through the participation of several local partners, including Mexicana Airlines, hotels, restaurants, resorts and other attractions, visitors were able to enter a popular drawing for a San Antonio vacation package with luxury accommodations and other amenities. The drawing was scheduled as in past years during the health fair's evening VIP dinner at the conclusion of the event.

# Visit new website for international patients and their families: SASalud.com



International Services has launched its own Web site, SASalud.com. The new educational Website was created to better inform and assist international patients. Through it, International Services will help patients with physician referrals language-interpretation services, financial arrangements, as well as travel and accommodations.

The Website serves to not only showcase the extensive health care resources available at Methodist Healthcare via the coordination of concierge services offered by International Services but also reinforces San Antonio as a preferred travel and a leisure destination. Local tourism and hospitality industry members are listed in the Visit San Antonio section and those that offer special promotions/discounts to ¡Viva! members are highlighted.

“Our new Website is another way that we are working to take care of the medical needs and overall health and wellness of our guests and their families,” said Ralph Foster II, director of International Services. “It’s an extension of our dedicated and focused approach to meeting the unique needs of our patients from around the world and providing support and comfort for their loved ones.”

## President of the University of Monterrey and Dean of the University’s Medical School are welcomed to Methodist Hospital

Methodist Healthcare recently hosted a visit by Dr. Antonio Dieck Assad, president of the University of Monterrey, and Dr. Eduardo Garcia Luna, dean of health sciences at the university.

For more than a decade, Methodist Healthcare has hosted students from the University of Monterrey Medical School through a program to develop bi-national medical education programs. The internship program developed between Methodist Healthcare and the University of Monterrey Medical School

includes three medical students who are completing their sixth year here.

During their visit, the two dignitaries met with Methodist Healthcare officials to develop a more structured internship program and to encourage participation from members of the MHS International Physician Panel.

The MHS delegation included Moises Bucay, M.D., Amil Ortiz, M.D., Robert Schnitzler, M.D, Ralph Foster II, director of International Services, and Tatiana Sultzbach, manager of diversity and

inclusion for International Services.

Students participating in the internship program are Gabriela Gonzalez, Christian Herrera, and Jesus Ricardo Rivero.

Through this bi-national medical education program, Methodist Healthcare continues to position itself as a leader in healthcare in the United States and internationally.



### Para Mayor Información

Desde México:

001-800-333-7333 (línea gratuita)

Fax: (210) 575-0174

#### Ralph Foster, II, MBA

Director, Servicios Internacionales

Teléfono: (210) 575-0165

E-mail: ralph.foster@MHSHealth.com

#### Tatiana Sultzbach, MBA, MA

Gerente, Diversidad e Inclusión

Teléfono: (210) 575-0164

E-mail: tatiana.sultzbach@MHSHealth.com

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