



MEDICAL TRAVEL FORUM

Compliance Guidelines Handbook

July 2021



Medical Excellence JAPAN (MEJ)

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Terms used in these Guidelines are defined as follows.

Medical Travelers: Travelers visiting Japan to receive medical services in Japan

Medical Travel Assistance Companies: Companies communicating closely with medical institutions and providing necessary assistance for medical travelers

MT FORUM or MTF: Abbreviation for MEDICAL TRAVEL FORUM

JIH (Japan International Hospitals): Hospitals with the intention, systems, and efforts to accept Medical Traveler

AMTAC (Accredited Medical Travel Assistance Companies): Companies certified as satisfying guidelines standards in relation to a series of services concerning the acceptance of Medical Traveler

Greeting

Medical Excellence JAPAN (MEJ) has started activities for the MEDICAL TRAVEL FORUM (the “MT FORUM” or the “MTF”). One purpose of these activities is to proactively encourage relationships of trust between medical institutions and Medical Travel Assistance Companies. The activities will also serve to contribute to the sound development of medical travel to Japan and the internationalization of medicine in Japan.

In order to make it possible for Medical Traveler to receive secure and safe diagnoses, it will be necessary for Japan’s medical institutions and Medical Travel Assistance Companies, which accept such persons, to collaborate with and understand each other more than ever and to build a relationship of mutual trust between both parties. Based on such recognition, we initiated the MT FORUM and created the Compliance Guidelines together with the MTF members and medical institutions (MEJ FORUM members and JIH recommended hospitals).

The purpose of these Compliance Guidelines is to regulate overall shared information and basic matters concerning judgments and the nature of behaviors undertaken in the course of carrying out services by you as MTF members. For times when you are unable to make reasonable judgments or questions arise from the viewpoint of compliance through daily services, this handbook is useful to be able to confirm the aforementioned matters on the spot immediately. We truly encourage you to carry and make use of it.

In observance of these Compliance Guidelines, Patient centered rational medicine based on evidence will be provided to Medical Traveler. In this way, we hope to contribute to the further development and soundness of medical travel to Japan, as well as to the internationalization of the medicine in Japan.

July 2021
Tatsuya Kondo
Chief Executive Officer
Medical Excellence JAPAN

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MEDICAL TRAVEL FORUM Compliance Declaration

In accordance with the Code of Conduct related to the MTF Constitution, as MEDICAL TRAVEL FORUM ("MTF") members, we hereby are committed to taking actions with high ethical standards and a law-abiding spirit so that Medical Traveler will be able to receive Patient centered rational medicine, and we will provide higher-quality medical travel assistance. In this way, we will aim at contribution to the medicine in Japan and development of medical travel to Japan.

Outline

Structure and Purpose	<p>These Compliance Guidelines are regulated under the MTF Constitution and are based on the Code of Conduct in Article 4 of the MTF Constitution.</p> <p>Moreover, in order to prevent difference in, misunderstanding, and misrecognition of interpretation, specific case examples are also included in these Compliance Guidelines to the maximum extent possible. This is the purpose of these Compliance Guidelines is to recognize roles of Medical Travel Assistance Companies and to form compliance policies for daily services of the MTF members.</p>
Members' Duties	<p>In according with the MTF Constitution, the MTF members shall be required to observe these Compliance Guidelines. In case that breach of such Compliance Guidelines has been identified, corresponding members shall be subject to guidance or dismissal from the MTF Bureau.</p> <p>Moreover, the MTF members shall verify observance of these Compliance Guidelines by themselves from time to time.</p> <p>Simultaneously therewith, they shall follow verification operations conducted by the MTF Bureau.</p>
Creation and Revision	<p>According to the on-site actual situation at all times, such as social environments and international affairs and in light of the purpose of the MTF, if some MTF members propose to do so, establishment of additional regulations or revision of the content of these Compliance Guidelines shall take place at any time through mutual consultation among MTF members including the MTF Bureau. In addition, when establishment of additional regulations or revision of the content of these Compliance Guidelines takes place, approval of the MEJ's Chief Executive Officer shall be obtained.</p>

Compliance Guidelines

1. Complying to laws and rules (Principle of Good Faith)

1.1 Understanding of the Laws of Japan

Insofar as Medical Traveler will undergo medical acts in Japan, it shall be natural for them to observe laws and regulations in Japan. Medical Travel Assistance Companies shall play the role of appropriately conveying information to such effect to Medical Traveler and of having them understand it.

- Legal actions in countries in which Medical Traveler reside may be illegal under the laws of Japan.
- Under the Medical Practitioners' Act, medical practitioners may not prescribe pharmaceuticals without diagnosing patients.

1.2 Service Based on Law

In relation to services for medical travel assistance (i.e., activities to collect proceeds), it shall be necessary to confirm whether or not the aforementioned relevant services (activities) are in violation of the Medical Care Act, the Travel Agency Act, or other associated laws or regulations of Japan.

- Medical Travel Assistance Companies not licensed by the Japan Tourism Agency, in accordance with the provisions of the Travel Agency Act, to collect the price of the pick-up transfer arrangement for Medical Traveler shall constitute an illegal act (i.e., "shirotaku" = a car illegally operating as a taxi). Moreover, for the aforementioned Medical Travel Assistance Companies not licensed thereby to gain commissions by offering services of pick-up transfer and accommodation etc. for Medical Traveler, therefor shall be contrary to the Travel Agency Act and the like. Therefore, such Medical Travel Assistance Companies not licensed thereby shall get the license (Registration for Tourism Agency Classes I, II, and III) or shall request that licensed operators handle the actions described above.

1.3 Note for Activities for Collecting Information and Publicity

Images of medical practitioners and/or medical institutions (buildings, etc.), logos of such institutions, or the like, shall not be used for the MTF members' own activities for collecting information or publicity without permission. Moreover, webpages and written brochures of medical institutions shall not be used without permission.

- Use if the aforementioned items arbitrarily and without permission from medical institutions shall be contrary to the laws of Japan, such as infringement of portrait rights and copyrights. Even if promotion activities are undertaken for targets located in foreign countries only, such activities shall not be allowed. Most importantly, the aforementioned actions shall cause a loss of trust from medical institutions.

Compliance Guidelines

1.4 Medical-related Information

Even if the MTF members have known certain medical-related information based on their own experiences, they shall provide Medical Traveler with such information after confirming it with medical institutions and medical practitioners without fail.

- While MTF members shall be committed to shall fulfilling their own roles as Medical Travel Assistance Companies, at the same time, they shall refrain from undertaking actions beyond their authority. To give medical advice to Medical Traveler may be contrary to the Medical Practitioners' Act, or the like.

1.5 Protection of Personal Information

It shall be necessary to strictly manage all information related to Medical Traveler as personal information (the Act on the Protection of Personal Information). Close attention shall be paid to handling such personal information and shall thoroughly undertake countermeasures against leakage risk for the same.

- When submitting personal information to medical institutions, such as patient referral information concerning Medical Traveler, by email, such information shall be transmitted via password-protected files. Moreover, attention should be paid so that the names, etc. of Medical Traveler would not be easily included in titles and/or main texts.

1.6 Difference in and Understanding about Culture, Religion, and Customs

It shall be necessary to understand differences in culture, religion, and custom so that discord arising from such differences related to Medical Traveler will not occur. Information necessary related to religion, etc. shall be obtained from Medical Traveler in advance. Furthermore, sufficient consideration and explanations shall be provided to Medical Traveler so that actions contrary to the laws and rules of Japan will not be undertaken based on differences in culture and customs.

- It is required that information related to foods and medical actions restricted based on culture, religion, and/or principles be collected, advisability of responses made by accepting medical institutions be confirmed, relevant explanations be provided to Medical Traveler, and approval thereof be obtained in advance.
- Preferential diagnosis requests made with donations to medical practitioners or the like, negotiations for discount of medical expenses, etc. shall lack common sense in Japan, and they shall not be allowed at sites of medicine in Japan. Explanations to the effect that even if Medical Traveler innocently conduct the aforementioned actions, such actions are prohibited shall be given to Medical Traveler, as needed.

Compliance Guidelines

2. Protection (Appropriate Handling) of Medical Traveler

2.1 Collection of Information about Medical Traveler

In order to undertake diagnoses in Japan, information concerning reasons and purposes of Medical Traveler, furthermore the information that medical institutions need shall be firmly collected.

- Some Medical Traveler may hold excessive desire to undertake diagnoses in Japan. Regarding whether or not it would be truly beneficial for given Medical Traveler to undertake such diagnoses in Japan, it shall be necessary to consult fairly without acting in accordance with in-house convenience.
- It shall be necessary to convey to them that impossible actions are absolutely impossible at the initial time without giving them ambiguous answers or allowing them to have excessive expectations.

2.2 Conveyance of Requests from Medical Traveler

With regards to the information of Medical Traveler, which should not only be responding to the requests from medical institutions, but also minor information requested by Medical Traveler shall be provided without omission to medical doctors and institutions in Japan.

- In particular, when translation takes place, caution shall be exercised. The content of information shall be conveyed accurately and without omission or leakage thereof.

2.3 Confirmation of Content of Medical Checkup

When reservations for medical check-ups are made, detailed information regarding the same, such as items included or not included in such medical check-ups, shall be appropriately and beforehand confirmed with and accurately conveyed to Medical Traveler.

- In relation to what Medical Traveler expect from health check-ups, in particular, if persons applying for medical check-ups differ from Medical Traveler, special attention shall be required. Sufficient caution shall be exercised because changes to the content of medical check-ups immediately before they take the same after their arriving in Japan will cause enormous difficulties to medical institutions.

Compliance Guidelines

2.4 Confirmation of Points to Note for Medical Checkups

Differently from medical care, some Medical Traveler believe that it would be easy to receive medical check-ups without much consideration. If points to note for taking medical check-ups are not matched, it may not be possible to receive the same. Points to note shall be surely conveyed to and observed by Medical Traveler.

- Medical Travel Assistance Companies shall play the important role for the following matters as well: (i) to firmly and thoroughly explain to Medical Traveler about dietary restrictions prior to medical check-ups, precautions at the time of taking inspections, etc.; (ii) to have them observe comply them; and (iii) if they have any physical concerns, to have them declare information to such effect accurately. One example is that if, despite the fact that Medical Traveler had metals within their bodies, they desired to take MRI examinations. Another example is when it was impossible to perform accurate and precise examinations of Medical Traveler because they did not comply with dietary restrictions prior to such examinations.

2.5 Monetary Amounts for Medical Traveler

Appropriate prices for the monetary amounts billed to Medical Traveler shall be computed based on confirmation with medical institutions.

(In case that relevant contacts have been executed with medical institutions, such contracts shall be in accordance with that contract)

- Even if another local intermediaries are involved between the MTF members and Medical Traveler, supervision shall be necessary to ensure that monetary amounts extremely differing from those approved by medical institutions will not be paid by Medical Traveler.

2.6 Travel Management and Visas for Medical Traveler

Types of visas for Medical Traveler to visit Japan shall be confirmed without fail. Caution shall be made such that the MTF members will not result in having a part in illegal overstaying by understanding the expiry dates, types (purposes), etc. of such visas.

- Medical Traveler with the Visa for Medical Stay shall take diagnoses in Japan at medical institutions that agree to guarantee such persons, in principle ("certificate from the medical institution about the planned medical services and references from the guarantor").
- When it has been determined that the MTF members undertake coordination services for Medical Traveler who have been guaranteed by other institutions (originally, it would be impossible for such cases to take place; however, there have been several related case examples in the past), information to such effect shall be reported to the MTF Bureau.

Compliance Guidelines

2.7 Understanding the Behavior of Medical Traveler

Even if the MTF members are not involved in travel arrangements, locations in Japan in which Medical Traveler are planning to stay and their behavior shall be understood. Medical Travel Assistance Companies shall play the role to maintain a state in which they are able to contact such persons at least at all times for contingency.

- In the case of emergencies, when the MTF members are guarantors of Visas for Medical Stay, such MTF members shall understand behaviors while they stay in Japan as a matter of course. Moreover, even when the MTF members are not such guarantors, they shall do so. If prohibited actions (e.g., taking treatment at separate medical institutions) are undertaken without the MTF members' knowledge, physical risks may be caused to Medical Traveler and it shall be caused trouble to medical institutions that the MTF members have requested.

2.8 Communication with Medical Traveler

In relation to communications with Medical Traveler, miscommunications caused due to language barriers shall not take place and smooth prior preparation shall be conducted using high-quality medical interpreters.

- Caution shall be exercised so that troubles caused due to daily misinterpretation (including translation of patient referral information) will not be caused. For example, the term "immunotherapy" in one word—what does it specially designate? Attention shall be necessary concerning whether or not Medical Traveler are able to have correct understanding through use of high-quality medical interpreters who are familiar with difficult medical terms and accurate communication.

2.9 Follow-ups following Diagnoses

Even after Persons Intending to Diagnoses in Japan have completed diagnoses in Japan and have returned home safe and sound, follow-ups of such persons shall be conducted, such as through observation.

- Even without instructions by medical institutions, follow-ups after returning home shall be conducted. If there are abnormal symptoms, feedback shall be given to medical institutions that have provided the relevant diagnoses.

Compliance Guidelines

3. Collaboration with Medical Institutions (Contribution to Sound Operation)

3.1 Corporate Partnership with Medical Institutions

When transactions occur with medical institutions, necessary contracts, memorandums, etc. shall be executed and mutual roles and responsibilities shall be clarified beforehand.

- When medical institutions undertake transactions with designated operators only, consultation shall be made with designated operators or the MTF Bureau.
- In relation to medical institutions that do not require contracts or memorandums, meetings with such medical institutions shall be firmly conducted to avoid future trouble (it is requested that such cases be reported to the MTF Bureau).

3.2 Selection of Medical Institutions (Prior Determination)

Medical Traveler shall be required to obtain confirmation for acceptance thereof by medical institutions at which they receive diagnoses. They shall not be allowed to visit Japan before such confirmation. Abusing of the "duty not to refuse any request for examination or treatment" shall constitute a breach of compliance.

- In case that Medical Traveler have visited Japan prior to confirmation of accepting medical institutions under unavoidable circumstances, taking Medical Traveler to medical institutions without providing them with any notification that such persons are Medical Traveler shall be deemed to constitute a breach of compliance.

3.3 Request for Acceptance of Medical Traveler

Many medical institutions shall retain the separate systems for accepting Medical Traveler from those for general domestic persons intending to receive diagnoses. When making requests for acceptance, first of all, the information to the effect that relevant applicants are Medical Traveler shall be provided and requests for acceptance thereof shall be made via appropriate liaison departments.

- Names of liaison departments accepting Medical Traveler shall differ from those of medical institutions. No departments exclusively for such purpose may exist. Relevant responses shall be made according to each medical institution.

Compliance Guidelines

3.4 Rules for the acceptance of Medical Traveler

In relation to acceptance of Medical Traveler, patient referral information and processes necessary for medical institutions differ from each other. For smooth acceptance, rules and processes for acceptance shall be confirmed with medical institutions and acceptance of such persons shall be moved along with.

- Rules and procedures for medical institutions differ from each other, such as medical institutions requiring expenses for judging advisability for acceptance, the ones that have created their own unique application forms, and others requiring special patient referral information. In relation to what is required for acceptance by relevant medical institutions, it shall be necessary to confirm their own rules and procedures in advance.
- Sufficient caution shall be exercised concerning the fact that Medical Travel Assistance Companies shall be responsible for troubles caused due to omission of communications, mistranslation/misinterpretation, and misrecognition.

3.5 Organization of Patient Medical Referral Information Required for Diagnoses

Upon diagnosis, much information shall be desirable, provided that in lieu of translating patient referral information (e.g., medical results obtained by Medical Traveler in their home countries or other counties) as it is and delivering the same to medical institutions, Medical Travel Assistance Companies play important roles for organizing necessary information and delivering such organized information to the medical institutions.

- Medical institutions that receive such information shall be able to immediately confirm organized information. As a result, it shall be possible for them to give replies to Medical Traveler quickly. In addition to patient referral information provided by local medical institutions, it shall be acceptable for the MTF members who are Medical Travel Assistance Companies to organize the information about names of illnesses, chronological medical records, current physical problems, and requests made by Medical Traveler on a single page in a clear and concise manner.

Compliance Guidelines

3.6 Conveyance of Information from Medical Institutions

The MTF members shall deliver notification and guidance from medical institutions to Medical Traveler without excess or deficiency and in an accurate manner such that neither misunderstanding by Medical Traveler nor misrecognition thereby will occur.

- The MTF members shall be sufficiently cautious regarding the fact that Medical Travel Assistance Companies assume responsibilities for troubles based on omission of communications, mistranslation/misinterpretation, misrecognition, etc.

3.7 Medical Plans and Prior Explanations and Consent ("Informed Consent")

Diagnostic agreements and informed consent processes are to be directly achieved between medical institutions and Medical Traveler, however, the content and points of the aforementioned agreements and informed consent processes shall be conveyed to the aforementioned persons before they visit Japan. Medical Travel Assistance Companies shall be required to understand positions on the side of medical institutions and awareness on the side of Medical Traveler and to convey the same to Medical Traveler beforehand.

- Medical institutions have tried their best at all times. However, it shall be necessary to advise Medical Traveler that radical cures may not be promised and that Medical Traveler will have to trust medical institutions and be required to undertake endeavors and provide cooperation to try to cure themselves, rather than leaving treatment of their illnesses up to medical institutions in a passive manner.
- It shall be important to make Medical Traveler understand well that contingencies that are totally impossible to be foreseen prior to commencement of treatment may occur despite the fact that medical institutions conduct treatment considering any and all possibilities.

Compliance Guidelines

3.8 Thorough Dissemination concerning Etiquette and Hospital Rules

Medical Travel Assistance Companies shall play the role of guiding Medical Traveler about etiquette and rules within medical institutions in Japan in advance for avoiding any troubles will not occur within facilities of medical institutions.

- Sufficient instructions shall be given in advance such that it will be absolutely not permitted for Medical Traveler to talk aloud in public locations, such as hospital waiting rooms, or eat and drink, smoke cigarettes, and use cellular phones in locations where the same is forbidden. Moreover, if troubles have occurred, the MTF members shall be required to respond thereto for solution of the same at their own responsibilities.

3.9 Japan's Health Care System (Medical Treatment Not Covered by Insurance)

Japan has a public health insurance system and the prices of medical services provided by such insurance have been regulated as medical service fees. Such prices are those through which insured persons who have joined public medical insurance receive benefits, which is called "medical treatment covered by insurance." When Medical Traveler receive diagnoses in Japan, medical treatment not covered by insurance shall become applicable, and the prices shall differ from those for persons who have joined public medical insurance. If Medical Traveler question the fact of medical expenses differing from those for medical treatment covered by insurance, correct information shall be conveyed such that no subsequent troubles will occur.

- After Medical Traveler have visited Japan for receiving diagnoses in Japan, changes to their medical treatment not covered by insurance to medical treatment covered by insurance shall not be allowed in the middle through becoming dependents of those who reside in Japan, etc., in principle. In relation to Medical Traveler who are likely to do so, the information to the effect that it is impossible for them to do shall be given to such persons in advance so that it will not take place before the actual occurrence thereof. For the MTF members to be involved into this shall be absolutely inexcusable. If such involvement (e.g., giving relevant advice) has been recognized, the relevant MTF members may be subject to expulsion from the MTF.

3.10 Settlement Services (Representative Settlement)

When Medical Travel Assistance Companies make payments to medical institutions (i.e., representative settlement) in lieu of Medical Traveler, relevant payment-related information, such as about the method of payment and period therefor, shall be confirmed with medical institutions beforehand. (And in case that there exist descriptions in contracts, such descriptions shall be followed.)

- Additional expenses may accrue during the diagnoses, such as for admission to hospitals. Portions up to detailed parts concerning representative settlement shall be assumed and prior consent with medical institutions shall be required.

Compliance Guidelines

3.11 Settlement Services (Settlement by Medical Traveler)

Some medical institutions may not allow agents to make relevant payments. In such case, relevant support shall be necessary such that Medical Traveler will make relevant payments via a method and in a period required by medical institutions.

- Some medical institutions may not be accustomed to methods for settling medical treatment not covered by insurance. In such case, it shall be necessary that meticulous explanations be given and settlement be conducted via methods approved by both parties.

3.12 Arrangement of Medical Interpreters and Quality Management

In order to manage quality for interpreters, based on approval of medical institutions, those who retain qualifications as medical interpreters shall be arranged or attendance by those who have specialized medical knowledge, such as holding the license of a medical practitioner or nurse, shall be provided.

- In particular, in the case of medical treatment, highly specialized knowledge shall be necessary. Therefore, Medical Travel Assistance Companies shall serve to manage quality for interpreters, such as providing them with associated materials beforehand and allowing them to learn such materials.

3.13 On-site Roles of Medical Interpreters

When outsourced medical interpreters have concurrent positions as coordinators and visit medical institutions as the agent for Medical Travel Assistance Companies, they shall be required to observe these Compliance Guidelines.

- Medical Travel Assistance Companies shall be aware that they will be responsible for the site without leaving the site to outsourced medical interpreters completely and shall intend to conduct close coordination with medical institutions.

3.14 On-site Interpretation Services

When interpretation for oral interviews, medical practitioner's diagnosis explanations, etc., takes place, for confirmation concerning omission or misinterpretation, recording conversation as well as taking memos shall be conducted depending on the case. Interpretation shall be carried out with the utmost attention to detail.

- When recording conversation, the prior approval of medical institutions and Medical Traveler shall be sure to obtain.

Compliance Guidelines

4. Sound Development of Medical Inbound Services (Secure, Safe, and High-quality Assistance Services)

4.1 Position of Medical Travel Assistance Companies

The role of Medical Travel Assistance Companies shall make adjustments between Medical Traveler and medical institutions. Therefore, they shall not spare no effort to gain understanding of the counterparties from the standpoint of both parties at all times.

- The MTF members shall not push either requests by Medical Traveler or medical institutions. If the MTF members have had difficulties in judgment, they shall consult on such matters with other MTF members and the MTF Bureau.

4.2 Selection of Medical Institutions (Prohibition of Deliberately guiding)

The selection of a medical institution is solely the responsibility of the medical traveler in the end, and medical travel assistance companies shall only provide them the necessary information.

Moreover, prioritizing intention by Medical Traveler, Medical Travel Assistance Companies shall not-guide them to specific medical institutions in order to pursue only their own benefits.

- There have been cases in which, for the reason that Medical Travel Assistance Companies did not have the close relationship with medical institutions desired by Medical Traveler, such Medical Traveler were guided to medical institutions with which the Medical Travel Assistance Companies were acquainted because the same type of diagnoses was possible. This kind of action shall not to be allowed because it will lead to a loss of trust from medical institutions.

4.3 Prohibition of Information Manipulation Related to Medical Institutions

When selecting medical institutions, neither false nor inaccurate information shall be provided to Medical Traveler.

Moreover, information that would cause disadvantages to medical institutions (actions equivalent to slander) shall not be subjectively dispatched.

- When information related to medical institutions is conveyed, the source of such information shall be disclosed to Medical Traveler, leaving judgments of authenticity up to the Medical Traveler. Medical Travel Assistance Companies shall not push their own ideas or opinions on to the judgments by such persons.

4.4 Sound Management and Deposit Management

Medical expenses, costs for staying, etc. that are deposited in advance, shall be surely managed.

- Actions that would cause disadvantage to Medical Traveler and medical institutions, such as by applying deposited medical expenses to corporate operations, shall not be allowed.



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