

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SUB COMMITTEE I OF THE NATIONAL MEDICAL AND WELLNESS TOURISM BOARD ON VISAS HELD ON 12TH JANUARY 2017, NEW DELHI

The Sub Committee I meeting of the National Medical and Wellness Tourism Board concerning with Visas was held under the chairmanship of Joint Secretary (Tourism) in New Delhi on 12th January 2017. The list of those attended is given at **Annexure**. The members were welcomed by Smt. Neela Lad, DDG (NT) and briefed about the decision of the Ministry of Home Affairs to include a new category of e-Medical Visa thus streamlining the process of issues of visas for tourists coming for purpose of Medical Tourism. It was also mentioned that the term of application has also been extended and that three entries would be allowed on e-Medical Visa. The members were then briefed about the other recommendations of the Sub-Committee in its first meeting on 26th April 2016 and the status of the recommendations so far. The recommendations were as follows:

- Duration of e-medical visa should be for 6 months, with double entry.
 - Attendants traveling with patients to be made eligible for e-medical visa on automatic route with a simplified online application procedure.
 - Hospitals to be tasked with responsibility of reporting of personal details of patients to FRRO in lieu of present system of personal reporting.
 - Requirement of referral letter from local doctor may be dropped.
 - Issues relating to Bangladesh/African countries to be taken up with MEA for further appropriate action.
 - Visa fee for e-medical visa to be rationalized.
 - Concerned agencies to expedite accreditation process and issue of accreditation letters with respect to treatment at Ayurveda and Wellness centers.
2. The Sub Committee members were of the view that there should be a clear indication of the broad cost of various treatments readily available for the patients and that the hospitals should have all inclusive packages advertised within a band.
3. The members of the Sub Committee welcomed the decision of the Government to introduce the category of e-Medical Visa and requested that the attendants should also be allowed on e-Medical Visa. This was also a demand of the Board but the same had not been agreed to by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Chairman then said that it could be possible that under the purpose of visit for e-TV category, a separate check box be included for Medical Attendant and that this could then be linked with documentation of the original applicant for the e-Medical Visa so that it could be clearly established who is coming in as the attendant. It was decided that MHA would be informed about the recommendation of Sub Committee.

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4. It was also informed that MHA had decided to provide e-Medical Visa on the basis of invitation letters from accredited hospitals. The Sub Committee recommended that NABH accreditation should be the basis for the invitation letters and MHA should be informed accordingly.

5. The Sub Committee also took up the facilitation of tourists coming on e-Medical Visa and also Medical Visas. MHA had communicated that separate immigration counters would be set up at major international airports for e-Medical Visas so that they do not have to stand in the general queues considering their delicate health situation. It had also been decided that a facilitation counter for such tourists would be set up outside the immigration area under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and the Hospital Association with interpreters for Russian and Arabic that would facilitate the tourists and help them to the medical facility they had registered for. However, MoHFW had requested Ministry of Tourism (MoT) to take the lead in setting up the counters. The Committee members deliberated on the various ways and means to achieve this and it was informed that MoT also would not be able to set up the counters given the present situation. Chairman suggested that NABH could be requested to set up the counters and man them and that since the tourists would be coming only on invitation from accredited hospitals. The cost for setting up and manning the counters could be met through the accreditation fee that NABH charges the hospitals. The counter could also be connected to the MoT Helpline number 1363 for multi language assistance, which is 24X7 service for tourists.

6. The Committee also further recommended that there should be a rationalization of costs and that the cost of e-Medical Visa should be on par with that of the Tourist Visa.

7. The Sub Committee therefore recommends the following:

- a. MHA may be requested to include at least one Medical Attendant who could accompany the patient on the e- Medical Visa and that the visa application for the attendant be linked with that of the patient (e-Medical Visa applicant).
 - b. Only invitation from NABH accredited hospitals be considered for e-Medical Visa.
 - c. NABH be requested to explore options of setting up and manning facilitation counter for the Medical Tourists at major international airports like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Kolkata.
 - d. Rationalise the cost of e-Medical Visa and make it at par with the e-Tourist Visa.
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ANNEXURE

MINISTRY OF TOURISM
MEETING OF THE SUB COMMITTEE I OF NATIONAL MEDICAL AND
WELLNESS TOURISM BOARD
12TH JANUARY 2017, TRANSPORT BHAWAN, NEW DELHI
ATTENDANCE LIST

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