



# Wellness Tourism Congress

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2013 · NEW DELHI, INDIA

**7th Annual Global Spa & Wellness Summit**

**New Dehli, India**

**October 5, 2013**

**Keynote Speech by Josef Woodman, Founder  
and CEO of Patients Beyond Borders**

**Why Medicine is Courting Wellness**

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## 7th Annual Global Spa & Wellness Summit

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FEMALE VOICE: Josef Woodman, the Founder and CEO of Patients Beyond Borders. His wonderful background in technology and health put him at the forefront of the latest discussions on international healthcare, telehealth, integrated medicine and consumer directed care. He's a frequently tapped expert on a variety of media outlets including CNN, ABC News, Fox News, the New York Times and many more.

But the most interesting thing I found out from him was that his first exposure to medical tourism was when his father went to Mexico and got \$30,000 worth of dental work done for less than half the price. And he said, immediately after that his stepmother went across the street and spent the entire savings on plastic surgery. And now welcome Joe Woodman.

[laughter]

[applause]

[break in audio]

MR. JOE WOODMAN: And I have to qualify that by saying stepmother. [laughter] And as long as we're talking about her, I must say she's kind of the antichrist of wellness. [laughter] She's the only person I know who chain smokes marijuana. [laughter] I mean that. I mean she will actually light a joint with the remains of the one before.

And I could probably spend the next 20 minutes just outlining all of the poor lifestyle choices and lifestyle behavior. And bless her soul, the reason I mention this is because she is in and out of hospitals and clinics all the time and doesn't really correlate the two. In fact, really likes her relationship with a lot of doctors that pay a lot of attention and presumably make a lot of money off of her.

Perhaps on a more serious note, I learned five days ago that my wife's sister was diagnosed with breast cancer. I don't know of another human being that's more new agey than Katherine [phonetic]. She quit her high powered attorneys job in New York City to come down and specifically to reduce the stress levels in her life. And actually bought some

acreage and founded the only locally produced, fully organic goat cheese dairy in our area.

And the reason I mention this is that it's clear from the day to day consultations that we're having, that I'm privy to, that as much as she embraces wellness, as much as she embraces all of those behaviors and all of the alternatives that have been presented to her, she's going to probably go ahead with the chemo. She's probably going to go ahead with the radiation. She's going to go ahead with a whole lot of the things that are related more to allopathic medicine.

I'm quite sure that she'll embrace a lot of wellness behaviors as well, as part of her recovery. But the beginning of her journey starts with that. And the reason I mention that and the points I want to make is that there's a lot of people out there, I think, that feel like they have all the answers. And really we don't have all the answers.

There's a lot of answers on the wellness side. And there's a lot of stuff that works really well. There's a lot of answers on the medical side. And there's a lot of clinical work that works really well.

And yet, it's bewildering to me, and has been for many years. I founded one of the first Wellness sites on the internet, back in 1997. We aggregated preventive care and wellness information and put it online and made it part of the HR experience and licensed it to employers and insurers.

And it was clear that there was a long way to go to bridge the gap between the medical and the wellness. And it's one of the things that really got me interested in medical tourism in the beginning.

I am kind of at the crossroads. And yet, it still remains bewildering to me how two somewhat separate, or very separate, cultures and mindsets, who have really very much the same goals when you think about it. The goal is for people to be healthy, for people not to get out of suffering, for people to be well, for people to somehow improve themselves but the methodologies are very, very different.

I wanted to just look at a little bit of that and I wanted to articulate it. I think we all have a vague notion of why wellness and medical care is such strange bedfellows. But it's important to note the history I think for just a little bit of this.

The clinical community grew up around science. It grew up around measurable outcomes. It grew up around lab rats and tests on monkeys, which none of us really probably find very savory. On the other hand, it saved tens of millions of lives. It's wiped out small pox. It's wiped out polio. It's on its way to doing the same thing with malaria and HIV. You can go on and on and on.

And because of that, and because the risks are so high, it's been built around benchmarks and quality assurance and patient safety, accreditation and regulation. And there's a kind of a closed society and an arrogance around that, that is very difficult to penetrate and they rely very heavily on that.

The wellness community, on the other hand, is not as regulated and it doesn't need to be in most cases. There's not as much risk. I haven't heard lately of death by yoga or meditation. And the other thing about clinical care is that it's more of a fix it approach. It's almost like a automobile shop. You just don't take your car in unless it's busted.

Hospitals are really very reactive, I think. Ophelia did a really good job with the SRI study with that chart that talked about the difference between medical tourism and wellness tourism. It's the same between medical and wellness.

And the wellness community grew up more around a spiritual quest, a quest for mind and body improvement. And a lot of the heroes and the spokespeople around wellness, at least as far as the average consumer is concerned, were more like the Deepak Chopra and Andrew Wilds of the world, which is fantastic. Even those people were tied to the medical community. It's very consumer driven. And it's very proactive and holistic.

These two worlds, it's easy to see when you deconstruct these two worlds, why it's been difficult, when it seems to be a no brainer sometimes for these two worlds that have essentially the same goals to come together. But why now? Why now is the medical community, and I'm really restricting my talk here to the medical community. Susie asked me to talk about that. She and I met each other at medical travel conference many years ago and she's fascinated, as she's fascinated by

so much about that convergence between the medical and wellness.

And very quickly, first of all, healthcare has created our healthcare, western healthcare, especially in the United States has just simply gotten out of control. And it's really turning into an economy buster. It's 18% of our GDP. It's going to be 20% in the year 2020. By comparison, other developed nations are somewhere around 7 to 10, 12% at most of GDP. And often they provide better healthcare to more people for their citizens.

In developing nations the spending per capita is going up at a rate faster than their per capita income, which means that the GDP is going to continue to rise there. I think Thierry mentioned it, that providing great healthcare for every single citizen is undoable. There aren't enough resources in the world to do that.

One of the tension factors, which is where wellness comes in, is something like 80% of global death from chronic diseases and they occur in low and middle income classes. So many of these chronic diseases are preventable. So many of them can be prevented by healthy lifestyle behaviors.

The second point is that wellness has become big business. If you just follow the money trail, we estimated a \$1 trillion market. I think it was noted on one of the slides. That it's a \$2 trillion market but as John Claude said, whose counting? [laughter] They're both very big numbers.

We're starting to think of wellness in terms of something more than simply just well being. Something more than even a visit to a destination or a day spa. We're thinking of it as a new dialog in many sectors, which I believe should seep into the universal dialog around wellness, and it's around preventive care. It's around management of chronic diseases. It's around management of healthy populations.

Because it's just clear that unhealthy populations lead to a big drag on society. And big drags on society means you don't have enough resources to educate your kids. The United States, we don't have enough resources to rebuild our infrastructure so cars are falling into rivers because bridges are breaking down. And I see, at least, an indirect relationship between the amount we spend on healthcare, how unhealthy our population is, and how ignorant our population is generally on wellness strategies.

The other big factor is an integrative and complimentary medicine are becoming a little bit of a norm. And they're beginning to work their way into the medical community. I think you can't have a discussion of this without talking about ACA. Because wellness is mentioned 27 times in the Affordable Healthcare Act.

And there a lot of provisions that are providing a lot of incentives around workplace wellness. Moving toward a more healthy employee population. And there are significant financial incentives being offered, not only, for employers but for insurers and even providers.

For people who are in the wellness business, and that includes people that own spas and wellness resorts and even in the hospitality business, there's opportunities to participate. And because the models for workplace wellness and for preventive care and integrated medicine have been advanced, and there's a lot of resources been thrown at it in the United States, I think that the kinds of wellness provisions that Obamacare contemplates, as they're carried out, are going to go global and become global models. So that other countries don't have to manage unhealthy populations, so they can get ahead of the curve and they don't have to have some huge number of folks having to manage their individual healthcare.

It's estimated that some \$300 billion of our \$2.7 trillion healthcare budget is directly related to poor lifestyle management and preventable disease. Wellness is becoming more evidence based. And I don't think you have to look too much further than Susie's spa evidence, which I think is one of the most under reported, hopefully not for long, and under rated bodies of information around evidence for just about any kind of wellness. Everything from acupuncture and massage to music therapy.

Anyone who hasn't gone to that website should visit it. And you will be amazed by the amount of research around wellness and research around holistic therapies and alternative therapies.

One of the problems is that the status quo, which is the healthcare community has their protocols around clinical trials. And they're the status quo and they would really rather sell the public an expensive pharmaceutical than saw grass palmetto for, let's say, prostate cancer.

But what we're seeing is that the new emphasis on outcomes and the way wellness practices are being slowly adopted in the medical community are forcing the medical community to become more outcomes oriented, become more quality assurance oriented, more benchmark oriented, around what we consider to be proven therapies and what they consider to be who ha. There's a science of wellness that is exciting and it's going to come from within the belly of the beast, if you will.

And the fifth and final, I can't ignore the younger folks. And when I say younger folks, I mean Gen X. And when I say Gen X, I used to think Gen X was somehow permanently 30 years old. [laughter] And I was told by an AARP member, when they were courting us way back in the day, that three years ago the first Gen X'er turned 50. And that was real news to me.

Not to mention Gen Y. And not to mention Gen Z or whatever the millennia generation. And these are people that really question everything. These are people that have vast access to information that a lot of our peers don't have or a lot of us old geezers over 60.

And that's also true with the medical community. I find that I would rather deal with the younger doctor who also grew up in an environment of questioning everything. And who may, even though he had a very rigorous training, who may want to talk a little bit more about a nutritional program. Who might want to talk a little bit more about alternative therapies.

I had a torn rotator cuff and I was careful about the surgeon that I chose. It was actually Boomgrande [phonetic] in Bangkok and he advised me not to have surgery. He advised me to go on a program of exercise and to stop doing what I was doing. And he was a younger guy. And he was a guy that you could talk to and it wasn't kind of a my way or the highway. I do see that some of the disruptive change around this convergence is going to happen around a younger group of people who really are a little tired of just being in the sickness business, if you will.

With the time I have left, which is two minutes, I'm a practical person. I wanted to just go over, very briefly, a couple of folks that I believe are kind of at the headwaters within the medical community, which the wellness community should be, I think, a little bit aware of. You don't have to

agree with it, but at least it's good to have the information.

Cleveland Clinic several years ago built a Wellness Institute. Within the Cleveland Clinic they hired a very high profile Michael Rosen whose Mehmet Oz's sidekick, he's all over Oprah, et cetera, et cetera.

And even if they're having trouble with some of their wellness programs, even if they're having trouble with their buy-in from their doctors, at least it's out there. And at least there's a dialog beginning.

One of the ones that I really love is the Barbados Fertility Clinic. They do mostly IVF. They're the smallest JCI Hospital in the world with 20 beds, mostly outpatient. But they have demonstrated outcomes now that no one questions, around the success rates directly related to a lack of stress from being in a nice environment. A beach environment, chill, have a baby. Rather than kind of the test tube lab rat approach that so many of the US and other kinds of clinics deploy.

And it's 62% now, and I think the 34 to 44 age range, which is a full 10 to 12 points above some of the experiences and some of the success rates that the US clinics are reporting. And they're beginning to advertise. I mean some of the IVF advertising, even if they're not implementing it, and they can't find a beach in Indiana, they are sounding a little more like a five star resort than a fertility clinic.

People should look into opportunities. Massage Envy, as most people know, have a corporate wellness program that is providing a lot of incentives and gifts and all kinds of corporate programs for corporations to incentives their employees to do better. And I don't think you have to be at Massage Envy, it helps, but I do think that spas should at least look at these kinds of opportunities.

I'm going to skip this one because we're out of time. But there's a full blown spa that has been built into one a really fine hospital in Dubai. And I think Kurt's going to address some of the advantages and disadvantages of actually trying to really force a spa into a hospital.

The last one is more on the hospitality side, but they have teamed up with the Marriott Courtyard to build, not so much a healthy hotel, but what they're beginning to call a hospatel

[phonetic]. Where they have medical services. Interns going in and out. Patients recovering, sometimes even hospital beds within the hotel. It's connected to the hotel so that you don't have to recover in a germ ridden inpatient or an ICU or whatever.

And connecting the dots is something that I think we can talk about maybe offline because I'm out of time. But I think that the main thing is the function of time over trust. There's no question that the two communities are beginning to come together.

There are a lot of strategies around complimentary, integrative, alternative medicine that we're going to see more and more acceptance on the part of medicine. And I hope more acceptance on the part of the wellness community. I think one of the things, in closing, that the wellness community needs to embrace a little more is regulation, outcomes, clinical trials, and really begin to push for those, even if it's not in the United States. That means everybody at one point will be very happy together and doing good by doing well. Thank you.

[applause]

[END RECORDING]