

Expo 2020: Looking after the health needs of the population and visitors

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Expo 2020 aims to attract over 180 participating nations', multi-national as well as small and medium sized corporates, and millions of people into the United Arab Emirates ("UAE") and the Emirate of Dubai, in order to celebrate human innovation. The logistics of managing the risks associated with vast numbers of visitors has its challenges. In this article, we look at the arrangements in place to ensure health needs are identified and supported, not only while on the Expo site, but while in-country.

The regulator responsible for the delivery of health services to the national population, expatriate residents and visitors in Dubai is the Dubai Health Authority ("DHA"). As most visitors are expected to fly into Dubai and make this Emirate their base during the visit, it is expected that DHA will shoulder much of the burden of ensuring it caters for the delivery of health services.

Expo Health Framework

As part of its advance planning, DHA has developed an Expo 2020 DHA Contribution & Support Framework ("Health Framework"), planning ahead in order to be suitably prepared and resourced to provide the best health and organisational services.

The Health Framework identifies key strategic objectives which are directly linked to the objectives of the Expo:

1. Position Dubai as a global medical destination by introducing a value-based, comprehensive, integrated and high quality service delivery system;
2. Direct resources to ensure healthy and safe environment for Dubai population;
3. Promote public and private collaboration in Healthcare;
4. Foster innovation across the continuum of care;
5. Revamp the governance structure of DHA; and
6. Establish efficient decision support systems by ensuring an integrated data platform.



health of Expo visitors

Unified process for managing the

DHA has developed a service charter for the Emirate of Dubai especially for Expo 2020 which caters for the needs of customers, visitors, and investors. Prior to the commencement of Expo 2020, DHA will create and use multiple communications channels to raise awareness of its commitment to providing information regarding the availability of health insurance, healthcare services, medical tourism and highlighting Dubai as a leading healthcare hub.

For participants and visitors requiring a visa (which in-turn requires having a medical fitness examination) DHA will provide medical fitness services in an innovative way to ensure that the experience upon arrival is fast and efficient. This is expected to include processing visitors through an airport clinic upon arrival into the emirate, and a process to link all medical reports with the unified electronic file and the public health control system.

While staying in Dubai, DHA will provide primary healthcare services, emergency services and specialised medical services through its integrated hospital network of facilities and clinics. It is also expected to have a clinic on-site at Expo ,2020 which again will link all medical reports with the unified electronic file system and the public health control system.

When the visitor then leaves the country DHA will provide all health reports to the visitor through a secure electronic portal called "my chart".

Priority projects and initiatives of DHA that are related to Expo 2020

In line with the key strategic objectives DHA is in the process of rolling-out identified priority projects and initiatives related to Expo 2020.

Hasana

The Public Health Surveillance Network that aims to monitor and reduce the spread of infectious diseases, follow up basic vaccinations and manage vaccination campaigns in Dubai.

Sheryan

A network of healthcare specialists among the UAE's health authorities as the only source of approved data for the issuance of temporary medical licenses to some professionals enabling them to take care of the needs of exhibitors and visitors at Expo 2020.

Dubai Heart Safe City Initiative

Developing an effective response system to make Dubai the "Heart Safe City" in the world by adopting healthy innovations to combat heart attacks.

Salama

The unified electronic medical file The unified electronic medical file that aims to create a unified electronic record for each patient, available in all the centers of DHA. It also provides doctors with accurate data on patients to help them in decision making, to achieve the best medical outcomes.

Strategy for Investment in the Health Care Sector Strategy for investment in the health care sector and partnership with the private sector, including investment in the Emirate and the service of Expo 2020

Salem

An integrated intelligent system designed to improve the customer's journey, reduce waiting time, and provide all services in one place, with the best methods, electronic systems and smart technologies.

Dubai Health Experience

A web site which will include a variety of travel information including how to obtain a UAE visa (if required), in addition to the option of booking the hotel and the round-trip tickets on Emirates Airlines. The site includes more than 17 hospitals, 45 health facilities and more than 600 health packages.

Health Facilities Performance Assessment System

A smart system measuring the performance of all health facilities in Dubai including an integrated star rating system that will be available for the public in the emirate.

DHA Central Call Center

A central Call Center as DHA's first line of customer service, responding to customer's inquiries, booking medical appointments and ease the communication of customers with DHA through telephone, website and social media channels.

Disclosed Source: DHA Expo 2020 DHA Contribution & Support Framework

Medical tourism and innovation

Dubai seeks to establish itself as a global hub for health tourism and innovation. In order to realise these objectives it is critical that the government of Dubai and DHA have a clear vision and strategy which will utilise Expo 2020 as a showcase for its services.

Recent legislative changes should improve the attractiveness of the emirate as a destination for medical tourism and innovation. Developments include new telehealth regulations, and initiatives based around the concept of 'wellness', that in turn are aligned with the 'Emirates Vision 2021' and emphasise the importance of preventive medicine to combat an increase in the prevalence of lifestyle-related diseases, and to identify and treat cancer, which is the third-leading cause of death in the country, after heart disease and accidents.



Public Private Partnerships

The DHA Investment Strategy 2017- 2020 has created an investment strategy that "Promote[s] Dubai as a viable and competitive hub for Investment In healthcare that address the needs of the Emirate and the future opportunities, and provide the best service for Investors and enable sustainable public-private model[s] in Dubai." Initiatives range from creating incentives to promote public private partnership ("PPP") investment, to reviewing and implementing regulatory changes that might encourage investment. A new piece of legislation is expected to be published later this year regarding PPPs in healthcare projects. These new and rapid changes are creating an attractive opportunity for foreign investment.

Conclusion

DHA has adopted a series of initiatives that will create a service delivery network of healthcare services for the Expo 2020 event, but that will also create opportunities for inward investment into the medical tourism and innovation strategy, thus ensuring it's own Expo legacy.

Al Tamimi & Company's healthcare team regularly advises on Middle East healthcare strategy, regulatory developments, and commercial matters and provides key support to our Expo 2020 practice group. For further information, please contact expo2020@tamimi.com).