

PRESS RELEASE



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“BOTAX” MAY BE A PAIN IN THE BUTTOCKS FOR U.S. COSMETIC SURGEONS

PROPOSED TAX ON COMMON COSMETIC PROCEDURES INCREASES INTEREST IN SURGERY ABROAD

Vernon Hills, Illinois – Nov 30, 2009

The proposed tax legislation, now being called “Botax,” in the Senate’s version of the health care reform bill has already triggered the unintended consequences that are often typical within the realm of large national economic policy decisions.

MedRetreat, an American company helping people receive affordable surgery abroad, has seen a significant increase in the number of people requesting cosmetic procedures outside of the U.S. “Within the last two weeks, since the news of the proposed tax first broke, we’ve seen a 400 percent increase in inquiries from people interested in receiving cosmetic procedures abroad”, says Patrick Marsek, managing director of MedRetreat. He adds, “Although this windfall of potential new patients is good news for the overseas cosmetic surgery market, U.S. cosmetic surgeons may not be so pleased.”

The near \$1 trillion health care bill unveiled last week by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) includes a 5 percent tax on many popular cosmetic procedures such as breast implants, tummy tucks, liposuction, and even teeth whitening.

New Jersey, currently, the only state with such a tax, serves as a real-world example of the unintended consequences of a punitive tax levied on cosmetic procedures. According to Dr. Phil Haeck of Seattle, Washington, the president-elect of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, the 6% tax levied on major cosmetic procedures in New Jersey has incentivized many of their citizens to travel to the neighboring states of New York and Pennsylvania.

Potentially making matters worse is the current economic recession that has already depressed the cosmetic industry. According to Dr. Haeck this new tax on cosmetic procedures would adversely impact the middle class, since close to 90 percent of cosmetic surgery patients are female, of which 60 percent having incomes between \$30,000 and 90,000.

If the proposed health care reform bill were passed as is, the tax on cosmetic procedures would take effect in January of 2010. “This new tax would be a significant boost to the medical travel industry. Since most patients traveling abroad for cosmetic surgery are already middle class women looking for the very best value – tacking on another 5% will make overseas cosmetic surgery even more appealing,” says Marsek.

MedRetreat connects North American patients with internationally accredited hospitals featuring U.S. board certified surgeons, some of whom are current members of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, at a cost savings of up to 80%. MedRetreat’s highly structured process of facilitation enables the patient to travel abroad and undergo medical treatment in a very safe and stress-free environment.

For more information about MedRetreat, please visit: <http://www.medretreat.com>

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