**Cuban international clinic promotes quality of life**

**Health tourism**

**Havana's Cira García Central Clinic offers a broad range of personalized health services for patients from abroad visiting or residing in the country**

Havana's Cira García Central Clinic offers personalized health services for patients whose lifestyles are affected by symptoms associated with chronic non-infectious diseases, which shorten and reduce the quality of their lives.

Diplomats and their families, business people, residents from abroad, tourists on extended stays, and others are afforded the opportunity to consult medical experts who guide them through diagnoses and appropriate treatment of ailments, in accordance with their needs.

Participants in this modality of health tourism are evaluated by a multi-disciplinary team of doctors who conduct an initial medical history and thorough exam, to inform patients regarding the best ways to manage their illnesses, with a focus on appropriate norms of behavior specific to their needs.

Medical staff will recommend tests based on the patient's age, prior illnesses, family history, and symptoms, to detect problems early and conduct diagnosis that allow for treatment in the incipient stage of a disease. If these exams show that the patient is in good health, he or she benefits from the peace of mind that comes from this awareness. Dr. Wilfrido Ruiz León, Internal Medicine specialist, commented to **Granma International** that these procedures are based on the results obtained in Cuba's national public health system, which focuses on primary care provided in neighborhood family doctor offices. This strategy has led to continual increases in life expectancy, now at an average of 78 years.

Diabetes mellitus, high blood pressure, stomach ulcers, obesity, and other chronic diseases can cause damage to other organs and body systems essential to life. Clinical exams and laboratory tests included in the Cira Garcia's programs are meant to detect and treat these associated health problems. Dr. Ruiz, an expert in managing and avoiding high blood pressure, explained that once a precise diagnosis of this condition has been made, patients are encouraged to have four annual check-ups to detect any variations and promptly adjust treatment as needed. Diabetics receive similar treatment, according to Dr. Adonis Arias Lambert, who emphasized the importance of treating the disease, especially in the case of older adults, obese persons, and those with a family history of diabetes. He cited statistics from the International Diabetes Federation, in the 5th edition of its report, that indicate the existence of 416 million people with the disease worldwide, projected to reach 642 million by 2040.

Dr. Arias, who has also studied atherosclerosis and infectious diseases, noted that pregnant women and babies with birth weights over four kilos may also suffer from the disease, continuing, "Our medical program has been planned to include follow-up based on a series of control goals established to reduce the risk of complications of diabetes which can damage the body's arteries." The doctor reported that the Cira García Clinic has the latest diagnostic equipment and technology, which allows the laboratory to swiftly provide accurate test results. He noted that the clinic has over 40 years experience working with patients from 120 countries. In 2016 alone, he said, 20,139 consultations were provided by specialists, and doctors on emergency duty treated 18,558 individuals.

The Cira García Clinic is located in the Havana neighborhood of Miramar, to the west of the city, and provides hospitalization, ambulatory treatment and consultation, emergency services, diagnostic lab tests, as well as physical therapy, and includes areas devoted to administration and logistic support. Its 37 rooms on three floors are all private and fully accessible to persons with disabilities; two are considered suites. All provide the comfort level expected in modern clinics, with electronically adjustable beds, direct oxygen supply and inhalation, full baths with hot and cold water 24 hours a day, beds for companions, air conditioning, cable television, night lights, safes for valuables, and direct communication with the nurses' station.

Health services here are high quality and scientifically based, provided with honesty and humanity. Clinic staff look to offer international visitors' medical security, guaranteeing the health and wellbeing that will allow them a successful stay in Cuba. This is corroborated by Venezuelan Julio Peña Benítez, who was first treated by the Cuban Medical Brigade in his country. These doctors recommended that he establish contact with the Cira Garcia Clinic in Havana, to seek help in better managing his diabetes. Peña said, "Service at this center is designed to provide effective, rapid, multi-disciplinary answers. I am guided by an experienced doctor who deftly wrote up my complete medical history, ordered tests, the results of which were ready the next day. The treatment is special; professionals present their best smiles and are always ready to help you. To tell the truth, I am very surprised."

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