



Ricardo Pedroza

SPOTLIGHT INTERVIEW: RICARDO PEDROZA, U.S. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PROCOLOMBIA

This interview was conducted by SIIA's partner in the Connect from Anywhere (CFA) live Medical Travel seminars and was originally released as a special issue of their digital newsletter, prior to the ProColombia live seminar. A recording of the seminar is available to SIIA members at www.siiacano.org.

ABOUT RICARDO PEDROZA:

As the U.S. executive director at ProColombia, Ricardo Pedroza is responsible for the promotion of non-traditional exports, international tourism and foreign direct investment in Colombia. Prior to this position starting in January 2021, Ricardo was the European Hub executive director for ProColombia. He was in charge of the European Region with direct presence in France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Russia, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

With extensive experience in the IT sector, Pedroza joined ProColombia in September 2017 and before his responsibilities in ProColombia, he worked in leading country and regional positions as North Latin-American head for RedHat, Country Manager vice president for Oracle and general manager for Microsoft. He started his career at NCR. In addition, he has been a member of several Boards of Directors for companies that invested in Colombia.

Pedroza is fluent in English, German and Spanish and holds a B.S. in Civil Engineer from Universidad de los Andes, has a marketing specialization degree from the same university and has attended multiple management courses in University of Michigan, Columbia Business School and Kellogg School of Management.



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ABOUT PROCOLOMBIA:

ProColombia is the government entity in charge of promoting international tourism and foreign direct investment in Colombia, non-mining energy exports and the country brand. Through its national and international network of offices, it offers Colombian

companies support and comprehensive advice through services or instruments focused on encouraging the design and execution of their internationalization strategies, as well as facilitating the generation and development of business opportunities.

Medical Travel & Digital Health News (MTDHN): Tell us a little bit about yourself and how you got involved in this whole project with Colombia and the hospitals.

Ricardo Pedroza (RP): I joined ProColombia more than three years ago to manage the European operations based in Germany. Before that I spent my career in the technology industry and IT sector.

I led companies for the region and for my country, like Microsoft and Oracle – to name a couple.

I joined ProColombia because I think there is great potential. We are focusing strongly and promoting tourism to the country, as well as investments and exports.

One important area is people visiting Colombia, not just for the tourist side, but also to receive services around the country. We do different types of medical services provided to people coming from outside. This is my passion – to ensure the potential for this opportunity.

I'm Colombian and have lived in the United States for a couple of years.

MTDHN: Why do you think Colombia is such an outstanding example of healthcare quality and services?

RP: Colombia's medical services are top-notch, no doubt about that. Most of the doctors have been trained not only in Colombia, but also outside Colombia.

Also, Colombia's location makes sense for many medical travelers from the United States. We are 2.5-3 hours from Miami and there are many direct flights connecting major cities.

Our service level and medical services are part of our DNA. We are very competitive on costs.

When you compare the quality that you receive, the type of medical procedures that you can get and the low costs, Colombia is a very attractive destination for medical travelers.

MTDHN: Would you say the cost is half, less than half?

RP: I wouldn't say a number because it always depends. But I would say that it's well worth it.

The quality of the medical training is very high, and we have cutting-edge technology. But the costs are considerably less, making it more convenient and cost-effective for many patients to fly to Colombia.

MTDHN: Where do most of your patients come from?

RP: They come from the Caribbean, the Antilles Netherlands (Caribbean), Aruba, Curacao, Ecuador, Panama and Peru. About half of them come from the United States.

MTDHN: What are some of your service lines?

RP: Oncology, cardiology, fertility, bariatric surgery, ophthalmology, dental and plastic surgeries.



We talk to different entities, companies and people that are interested, serving as a link between the final providers. We are a government agency, so we don't buy or sell – just promote.

MTDHN: Do you have a specialized Neonatal Intensive Care Units for newborns?

RP: For newborns, you have 17 options across different cities, with certified facilities.

MTDHN: Can you talk a little bit about the oncology and advanced chemotherapy or cancer care?

RP: We have places, for example, Fundacion Cardiovascular, which is a well-known institution for cardiology.

You can find all types of surgeries at all levels with doctors who were trained in Colombia and the United States and offer high quality medical services.

MTDHN: I understand that you have an office in Miami, Florida. Tell us a little bit about that operation.

RP: Yes, and we have offices around the world. Florida is our main operation in the United States. We help to promote tourism, investment and exports from Colombia.

MTDHN: When a patient travels to Colombia for care, what kind of follow-up is available back home?

RP: Once they go to Colombia and get a procedure, they have support for accommodations, paperwork and tourism options. For follow-up care, they use telehealth.

MTDHN: If a patient has a less than optimal outcome, what is your policy?

RP: It depends on the institution, but I can certainly say that there's always a solution. Again, the way we look at it, it's a way of making sure the patient has received the treatments he or she requires. We work with the different institutions, which have excellent track records.

MTDHN: Are patients going to be required to have a COVID vaccine?

RP: We have many protocols and standards around being tested.

MTDHN: Can you discuss safety measures for medical travelers?

RP: My country has changed a lot in the last 25 years. Tourism has been very strong, at least before the pandemic, with people flying down at two or three times more than other regions.

Medellin, for example, is very safe to walk the streets and go to restaurants. Unfortunately, there's a lingering negative image about Colombia, but that perception is changing.





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MTDHN: What do you think are the most outstanding features of the Colombian health care?

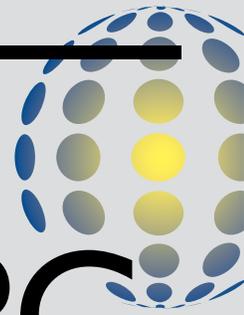
RP: I would say quality. Colombian professionals are recognized for being highly professional in what they do. Also, the people are very friendly and service oriented. They make you feel welcome.

MTDHN: Do the doctors speak English?

RP: Yes, in the places where we have medical travel programs, they speak English and are bilingual. There are also people available to assist if translation is required.

MTDHN: Tells us about your telemedicine programs.

RP: In Colombia, you can have most appointments with doctors with telemedicine, which makes it very flexible. For those who want to contact us they can call us at (305) 374-3144 or email us at rvelasquez@procolombia.co (Renatta Velasquez). ■



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