Interview: Dr. Misael Uribe – Chairman & Founder, Médica Sur, Mexico



"Médica Sur was founded with the intention of developing a concept that was already established in leading markets such as Europe and the US and that provided innovation and medical education in addition to high quality care."

23.05.2017

Tags: Mexico, Médica Sur, Healthcare, Hospitals

Dr. Misael Uribe, chairman and founder at Médica Sur, showcases the reasons for the outstanding performance of the Médica Sur group, which offers high quality and ethical medical practices. Uribe also explains the group's unique development path.

Dr. Uribe, as this is the first time that we have had the pleasure to meet with you, could you please introduce yourself to our international audience?

I specialize in gastroenterology and hepatology and am a practitioner and clinical researcher in these areas. In addition, I have been professor in both national and international leading medicine universities, author of more than 30 books on gastroenterology, as well as more than 230 research papers published in indexed journals. Expanding on my professional profile, in 1981 a group of academic colleges and friends and I founded Médica Sur jointly with other physicians and I am currently the chairman of the group.

You have a quite impressive track record within the Mexican and international medical arena. Looking at the roots of Médica Sur, could you explain to our international audience the factors that triggered you to fund the high-end hospital group Médica Sur?

Médica Sur was founded with the intention of developing a concept that was already established in leading markets such as Europe and the US and that provided innovation and medical education in addition to high quality care. Indeed, these values have strongly distinguished Médica Sur and have

positioned the group as a leading medical body within the national and international arena, being the only hospital group listed in the Mexican stock market for more than 20 years.

I want to highlight that the hospital was founded by physicians, which is not usual in big medical institutions, and it has certainly helped us to be loyal to our core values. Our underpinnings are patients' welfare, ethical medical practices, and continuous improvement.

It seems as if the hospital has been highly active during the last decade. Could you expand on the most prominent accomplishments of Médica Sur during the last five years?

The financial and operational stability gained during the last years as well as our highly-committed teams are some of the most important accomplishments so far.

In addition, we have enlarged our operations to other areas such as diagnosis to enhance our financial KPIs. The results of this diversification process have been quite positive so far and it is one of the most recent successes of the group.

The figures of Médica Sur certainly talk for themselves with more than 15,000 hospitalized patients, 10,000 surgeries and more than two million diagnostic studies in the last year. Furthermore, the institution has won several national as well as international prizes thanks to the high quality of its operations. What has been the strategy of Médica Sur to obtain such success considering the high dynamism of the industry?

[Featured_in]

The outstanding performance of a hospital is a combination of high quality infrastructure, well-defined medical procedures, and a highly qualified and committed team. As aforesaid, continuous improvement is in our core values and, in this sense, we have weekly meetings in which every department show its professional and economic results to identify the rooms for improvement; such meetings also help us to track the performance of the measures implemented in the past. In addition, we obviously back up such philosophy with the best and top-notch equipment to support our physicians' activities.

It has not been easy to successfully navigate such a challenging environment, both in terms of competition and politics, but the results are there. I want to highlight that even though we are listed on the Mexican stock market, we have always put patients' satisfaction and quality at the center of our strategy. Indeed, the hospital is 95 percent occupied because of a high satisfaction

level from our former and current patients as well as the high quality of our medical practices. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that most of our shareholders are either physicians or former patients, thus they share the same vision as Médica Sur: provide the patients with high quality healthcare services and medical care at an affordable price.

Médica Sur offers three levels of care: primary care, secondary care, and high specialty. Could you expand on the infrastructure that Médica Sur has in each segment?

We are still developing our capabilities in each level of care. In primary care, we are in a process of establishing a patient consultation in every laboratory-testing center that we have; indeed, there are already approximately 160 units within such program. In secondary care, we have a group of general small and medium sized hospitals with a capacity of approximately 40 beds. In order to increase our capabilities in secondary care, we have created a group called *Médica Sur red en apoyo a la salud* that aims to affiliate with other hospitals in order to find infrastructure synergies as well as to share best practices. Expanding on our high specialty care infrastructure, we have another hospital in the north of Mexico City that provides women's care services; however, we also have other areas of specialty such as oncology.

Could you expand on which therapeutic areas Médica Sur is most recognized for?

We provide high quality medical services in all therapeutic areas that we are involved in and Médica Sur is therefore well recognized in several areas such as oncology, gastroenterology, orthopedics, and neurosurgery.

[related_story]

Dr. Narro Robles has been continuously highlighting the importance of building up public-private partnerships (PPPs) to ensure the quality and the goals of the national health system, leveraging on government and companies' resources. As the president of the leading hospital group in Mexico, how do you think PPPs will help to reduce the healthcare gap in Mexico and how is Médica Sur partnering with public health institutions such as IMSS and ISSSTE to increase patients' access to health?

The biggest challenge of bringing healthcare to the Mexican population is the existing financial constraints that the Mexican government is currently passing through. Therefore, private industry should implement the best practices in the industry in order to enhance the efficiency in the public health institutions, which due to economic limitations are far away from private industry efficiency standards.

Even though there have been some advancements within the PPPs arena, there is still a long way to go. Nevertheless, Médica Sur is fully opened to this type of collaboration and we are working on creating evidences of our best practices to transfer them to the public health institutions. Indeed, we are introducing the most innovative treatments in Mexico such as molecular diagnosis at an affordable price; such innovation would not be able to be introduced without our efficiency practices.

Medical education is one of the main challenges of the country and, indeed, one of the main underpinnings of Médica Sur is to increase the number of healthcare professionals in Mexico. Could you expand on how Médica Sur is transmitting education to future healthcare professionals?

Medical education is certainly within our core values and, indeed, Médica Sur is already a university hospital. We have residents from different universities and our numbers of students are approximately the same as our number of beds; in my opinion the proper balance is having one resident per bed. I am proud to confirm that we are doing education programs for many different therapeutic areas such as internal medicine, oncology, geriatrics, cardiovascular and intensive care.

I would like to highlight that we carefully select the professionals that are going to be enrolled in such a program. In this sense, we target the best and only select those who have an academic score of 9.5 out of 10 in their university of medicine. In addition, we finance train abroad programs for the best performers of our in-house education program to give them the opportunity to see how medicine is conducted in different parts of the world. We have a clear life career for those residents that enter into our program.

It is worth mentioning that currently 40 percent of the physicians that are working in Médica Sur are former alumni of the hospital. Nonetheless, we also foster our alumni to work in other national and international healthcare institutions to expand our knowledge and philosophy to other hospitals.

What is your investment strategy to continue enlarging the reach of your operations?

In 2017, we are planning to start the construction of a new building and it will be an investment of around USD 50 million. We are expecting to increase our consultation capabilities by 50 percent through infrastructure enlargement plan as well as to enhance our healthcare services in other areas.

What are the main objectives for the upcoming three years?

The main priority on my agenda is to continue consolidating our operations offering high quality and competitive health services. Secondly, one of my objectives is to expand our capabilities to other therapeutic areas and services introducing new technologies such as molecular diagnostics. Finally, I want to build up alliances with national and international leading healthcare institutions to expand our “Médica Sur” concept to the rest of the country in the short term and to the rest of the region in the mid-term.

See more interviews