Surgery Facilities Resources, Inc./AAAASFI Expands International Accreditation into New Markets

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Surgery Facilities Resources, Inc. (SFR) is a subsidiary organization to the American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities (AAAASF), the “gold standard” for surgery facility accreditation in the United States. Organized in 2005, SFR was created to offer a program of accreditation internationally. In 2009, the SFR international accreditation program was renamed AAAASFI (AAAASF International) by the SFR board of directors. The AAAASFI name best represents who SFR is in international accreditation.

Latin America countries have a significant interest in accreditation, especially Costa Rica. Currently, 40 AAAASFI accredited surgery facilities exist worldwide, as represented by Belgium, Serbia, South Africa, Australia, Finland, and Costa Rica. For a complete list of AAAASFI-accredited facilities, visit <http://www.surgeryfacility.com>.

Past SFR President Michael McGuire and current SFR President Ronald Iverson, MD have championed this program of international accreditation for the past 5 years by speaking at many prestigious global conferences on health care and medical tourism and inspecting surgery facilities around the world.

Recently, Jeff Percy, Executive Vice President, attended the Latin America Congress on Medical Tourism in Costa Rica and spoke on a panel discussing accreditation and patient safety. Dr. Geoffrey Keyes, AAAASF Secretary/Treasurer, was a keynote presenter on the second day of the Congress, presenting the latest study derived from the AAAASF peer review system data. It was the only

data-driven presentation in the Congress. The President of Pro-Med, an international medical group and a leader in the movement to create a safe environment for medical tourism in Costa Rica, praised Dr. Keyes’ presentation.

Representatives from Guatemala are in the process of working with Mr. Oscar Molina, the AAAASFI Latin American representative working for SFR, to discuss the development of an accreditation program that mirrors the successful program in Costa Rica. Many major Guatemalan dental facilities have received our application materials in anticipation of accreditation. A special set of dental standards has been developed by AAAASFI that more closely relate to surgical practices performed in dental clinics.

Representatives from the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Columbia government agencies have received our accreditation program materials and have requested that we contact them for future development. A key contact for AAAASFI is Carlos Enrique Cardenas Rendon, director of a cluster of services for surgery and dentistry in Columbia.

The benefits of global accreditation for plastic surgeons include the following:

- *International practice of medicine:* Aesthetic surgery has no true borders. It is becoming common practice for people to seek their aesthetic surgery in many different countries. Regardless of the motivation for this trend, one thing is constant: People want to be certain that they are receiving care in a safe facility. International accreditation gives them that assurance.
- *Market advantage:* Every country has individuals from a variety of surgical disciplines who currently offer aesthetic surgery. These people often qualify for their national or provincial license but may have only limited training and education in plastic surgery. The SFR/AAAASFI accreditation for aesthetic surgery is an

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effective tool for separating your practice from those of lesser quality.

- *Assurance to patients:* The certificate of accreditation is a symbol to patients that the accredited facility has taken the additional step of opening its practice to the scrutiny of an international organization dedicated to patient safety. This could be a deciding factor for patients seeking the highest-quality results in the safest environments.

Dr. Ronald Iverson, President of SFR, has said, “This is truly a golden opportunity for any plastic surgeon to be recognized as a leader in his/her profession and to

demonstrate to potential patients that he/she has taken every possible precaution for their safety. With the increased activity in medical tourism, now is the time to get involved in this international patient safety program of inspection and accreditation to help improve patient safety and quality care globally.”

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