

Meet Martha

Patient Experience Best Practices: Caring for Anxious Families and Friends

By Elizabeth Ziemba, President, Medical Tourism Training



Imagine your child, spouse, relative, best friend – any loved one – is in hospital in critical condition. Your thoughts are for that person, not your own well-being. You are not eating, sleeping, even drinking water. No one is taking care of you, but you are of vital importance to the person who is sick.

Now imagine that Martha wheels her cart into the room where you are sitting bedside exhausted and hungry. She offers you a hot cup of coffee, a cold drink, homemade sandwich or soup. You realize you have not eaten for more than a day. Her kindness can bring you to tears.



During a recent visit to [Hospital Internacional de Colombia](#), (HIC) in Bucaramanga, I met Martha while on a hospital tour. She was making the rounds on the pediatrics floor, taking care of anxious parents. This solution, bringing nutritious food to the families staying with sick patients, makes tremendous sense.

No one wants to leave the bedside of a sick loved one, so those caregivers do not go to the cafeteria. The combination of stress, hunger, and dehydration are a recipe for getting sick, just at the time when caregivers are needed most.

Bringing healthy food to the caregivers is a much better solution than those ubiquitous vending machines found in hospitals that only offer junk food and undrinkable coffee.

While hospitals must focus most of their energies on the patients, it is important to take care of family and friends who are providing emotional and psychological support by their presence. Part of the patient experience is taking care of the patient's support system. Intelligent solutions to help family and friends is as easy as Martha and her cart bringing excellent food and her warm smile to them.

Medical Tourism Training works with private and public sector organizations that contribute to the end-to-end patient experience. Need help improving your patient experience? Contact us today!

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