

FREE MEDICAL INSURANCE FOR MEXICO CITY TOURISTS



In an effort to defibrillate its tourist industry after the shock of the swine flu outbreak, **Mexico City** is reaching out by being **generous**. Under a scheme launched late July, the city's tourism office is offering free medical insurance and tourist assistance worth an estimated USD 30 per person to every tourist that visits the city. "Of all the world's largest cities, Mexico City is the first to try this," said Mayor Marcelo Ebrard at a ceremony unveiling the service. Since average hotel occupancy rates dropped to a record low in April/May of this year, the tourist department has been quick to introduce an incentive for both national and international guests. It's no surprise that "medical assistance in case of influenza AH1N1" heads up the list of services on the official website. Medical assistance for any other ailment, as well as emergency hospital accommodation and dental care are also included in the policies, which are underwritten by insurance provider **MAPFRE**. The insurance isn't limited to medical issues; a 24-hour call centre will also provide legal assistance in case of robbery, and will help tourists whose flight is cancelled or delayed. The centre is staffed by attendants who are fluent in English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish, who will even book tickets for events in the city. Whether or not this initiative will bring back the tourists remains to be seen. But it's an innovative move by Mexico City, tackling a major issue with wide-sweeping generosity. Spotted by: Murtaza Ali Patel

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Email: servicios@mexicocity.gob.mx

Website: www.mexicocity.gob.mx/contenido.php?cat=50500c=13