



## HEALTHY SOLUTIONS

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# Cancer Treatment in Guatemala

*State-of-the-art treatment centers and excellent oncologists offer viable options for patients*

Just say the word “cancer” and all sorts of emotions arise. Maybe we remember the sadness and loss of a co-worker or neighbor. Sometimes the grief strikes closer to home, like my husband, or your sister, or worse, a child. But more and more, we are experiencing another set of emotions regarding cancer treatment today: hope, bravery, triumph, relief and gratitude.

In the United States, one in six people is expected to suffer some form of cancer in their lifetime. With this sobering statistic regularly in the news, you have to wonder how this disease might affect your lifestyle, family relationships and retirement fund.

Determining the most effective course of treatment is not always a clear choice, as it is the result of extensive testing and careful planning by a team of cooperating specialists. Having insurance is no guarantee that you will be protected from major, life-changing expenses. Patients with insurance are thinking carefully before agreeing to treatment, because out-of-pocket co-payments for the drugs alone could easily run \$15,000 to \$30,000 a year.

In Guatemala, we are proud to offer three cancer treatment centers and top-notch oncologists, each with a separate focus, that are able to work in conjunction as a team, together with the surgeons, to impact the patient’s treatment plan toward a successful recovery.

Dr. Luis Linares of Hope Radiotherapy Center has over 25 years of experience performing 25,000 cancer-related procedures. From university studies in England to extensive research and work at Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and then as medical director of the New Orleans Cancer Center, he has brought his skills and expertise back home to us in Guatemala. Offering radiotherapy and brachytherapy, Hope International opened in 2010 with state-of-the-art cancer treatment technology which surpasses the quality available in 60% of cancer hospitals in the United States.


Radiotherapy involves directing a specialized external beam into the tumor to diminish or destroy it, while brachytherapy is a time-release method of implanting seeds that release radiation in specific daily doses. In both of the non-painful treatments, no surrounding tissue is damaged. At Hope International, eight weeks of radiotherapy treatment, with five sessions per week, costs around \$10,000, compared to \$50k-90k in the U.S.

Dr. Luis M. Zetina Toache is leading figure in Latin America in the field of chemotherapy. As medical director of ONCOMEDICA Cancer Consultants since 2000, Dr. Zetina conducts high-level scientific research on new cancer drugs, here in Guatemala, fully supported by the FDA.

He has participated in research protocols on Herceptin, Avastin, Tarceva, Xeloda and other drugs to successfully treat cancer with the latest advances in chemotherapy treatment methods.

Dr. Zetina is a member of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, the European Society of Medical Oncology and the Chemotherapy Foundation, a non-profit organization founded by Dr. Ezra Greenspan of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York. We are grateful to have the benefit of his many years of cutting-edge skills and research available to us here, in zone 15, Guatemala City.

At Medi-Center Guatemala, Dr. Byron Sanchez, a well-published hematologist and oncologist, has been researching the possible benefits of stem cell treatments for his patients. Although success rates vary, we look forward to the day when this exciting biotech application could be the source of reliable long-term positive results.

All of the physicians agree that early detection is the best hope for a cure. Since it is more difficult to treat patients who may have been mishandled or misdiagnosed by other doctors, the most highly skilled cancer specialists agree that the personal situation of each patient must be carefully analyzed before deciding which treatment plan is best for that particular patient. 

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