

PRESS RELEASE

The Future of Medical Spas Explored

CHUR-PASSUGG – On 6 June 2019, EHL Swiss School of Tourism and Hospitality (SSTH) hosted the first Swiss Medical Spa & Hospitality Think Tank. This one-day forum saw leading industry experts, academics and students come together to compile the status quo, reflect on examples of best practice and identify areas of potential for the future when combining new medical and spa trends in the hospitality industry.

With self-care and well-being becoming increasingly high-profile topics, the demand for medical services in the hospitality and tourism sectors is growing. According to the Global Wellness Institute, wellness tourism is expected to see average annual growth of 7.5% through 2022 – and with wellness accounting for a considerable 58% share of global health expenditures, this market certainly warrants attention. Whether it be preventive approaches in the interests of general health, such as diet and fitness, life coaching or stress management, or providing an environment that is conducive to a speedy recovery from a specific ailment, today's guests expect a well-rounded package.

“Growth in the global medical spa market is driven by the increasing number of aesthetic medicine and cosmetic treatment options for beauty enhancement, and by the growth in wellness trends among developed nations. The rise in medical tourism in developing economies like India, China and Brazil is also expected to be a driver of growth.” explained CV Wijeratne, Head of Spa & Wellness Management Major at SSTH.

Delving deeper, the Think Tank speakers revealed that the demand for hospitality expertise and talent is also felt in the provision of traditional medical treatments. As Dr Peter Yesawich of Brown Legacy Group explained, it is the orientation towards the guest experience inherent in hospitality – or indeed the patient experience in this case – that lies behind the “Mother Standard®” of care practiced at Cancer Treatment Centers of America®. This same holistic approach, striving to optimize the guest experience at each touchpoint, has enabled Lisa Clarke of the Destination Medical Center's Economic Development Agency to overhaul the infrastructure surrounding Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. The clinic itself had an outstanding reputation but lacked hoteliers to provide a safe haven between treatments and an accessible, engaging environment to detract from the physical and emotional burden of undergoing treatment.

Further expert input was received from:

- Dr. Radesh Palikurthi of the University of Memphis:
Outbound Health and Wellness Tourism Destination Choice by U.S. Consumers: A Trade-off Analysis of the Significant Decision Factors
- Dr. Ali Poorani of the University of Delaware:
Hospitality Associates for Research & Training: “Marketing & Sensory Evaluations”
- Dr Frederick J. De Micco of the University of Delaware and CV Wijeratne of SSTH:
Presentation of Research and Expert Panel “Bridging Healthcare to Hospitality (H2H)”

Forming a panel, the speakers then discussed the key forces driving change and opportunities in the global health, spa and wellness, medical and hospitality industry, as well as potential components of a corresponding curriculum.

SSTH Managing Director Michael Hartmann has developed a Swiss Professional Degree program with an option to major in Spa & Wellness Management that not only conveys functional management expertise, but also strengthens soft skills. "People want an experience. People want all of their senses to be stimulated. People want us to build on their childhood imprints. This is particularly relevant for health and wellbeing tourism, where guests have very specific expectations and needs. The medical and hospitality fields are connecting their expertise to provide patients and guests with a higher quality experience on all aspects." The affective sciences approach to the SSTH teaching method ensures students meet these expectations: practising self-reflection, gaining independence, developing self-assurance, honing their empathy and embodying professionalism before assuming their role as metaphorical stage directors in this new landscape.

About EHL Group

EHL Group encompasses a portfolio of specialized business units that deliver hospitality management education and innovation worldwide. Headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland, the Group includes:

[EHL Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne](#) Lausanne is an ambassador for traditional Swiss hospitality and has been a pioneer in hospitality education since 1893 with over 25,000 alumni worldwide and over 120 nationalities. EHL is the world's first hospitality management school that provides university-level programs at its campuses in Lausanne and Chur-Passugg, as well as online learning solutions. The School is ranked n°1 by QS World University Rankings by subject and CEOWorld Magazine, and its gastronomic restaurant is the world's only educational establishment to hold a Michelin Star.

[EHL Swiss School of Tourism and Hospitality \(Chur-Passugg\)](#) has been one of the leading hospitality management schools for hotel specialists for 50 years. The school delivers Swiss-accredited professional training and higher education in its newly renovated 19th century spa-hotel in Chur-Passugg, Graubünden, to Swiss and international students from 20 countries.

[EHL Advisory Services](#) is the largest Swiss hospitality advisory company with expertise in the development of educational models and quality assurance for learning centers, as well as strategic and operational advisory for businesses, namely providing benchmark service culture implementation to companies within the hospitality sector and beyond. EHL Advisory Services has offices in Lausanne, Beijing, Shanghai and New Delhi and has delivered mandates in more than 60 countries over the past 40 years.

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