



Plastic surgeon
Jānis Zaržekis

Riga Offers Medical Tourism Services

TEXT: AIGA PELĀNE PHOTO: KASPARS GOBA

High quality medical care and services combined with adequate prices are the main reason why so many foreign citizens have entrusted their health and beauty to doctors in Riga. But until now, only a rare few private medical establishments in Latvia organized the flow of foreign patients to their clinics. Today the situation has changed. Physicians have taken the initiative into their own hands and, together with several collaboration partners, have formed an alliance and a new brand for the medical tourism field – Baltic Care .

The company has already opened a branch in London. But England isn't the only place where Riga's doctors hope to operate. In the future, they plan to offer their services in Scandinavia, Germany, Norway, Ireland, Russian, Ukraine, and Belarus.

Eight private clinics and one tourism agency now operate under the Baltic Care band. But this doesn't mean their numbers aren't increasing. According to plastic surgeon Jānis Zaržekis, a founder of the alliance, "We chose the name Baltic Care because we are open to collaboration not only with local clinics; we are also well aware of the strengths of physicians at clinics in Lithuania and Estonia. In the future, if we see a heavy flow of patients, we are open to establishing partnerships with private clinics in the other two Baltic states."

The physicians note that they have recently received support from the state and from the Riga City Council. The Baltic Care alliance also includes one of the leading Latvian tourism agencies, Vanilla Travel, which offers medical tourists other recreational opportunities in Latvia. A partnership with the national airline,

airBaltic, allows travellers to purchase plane tickets to and from Riga for very attractive prices.

"We can offer high-quality professional doctors, a high level of health care and medical technologies, and very adequate prices," says Dr. Zaržekis, emphasizing Latvia's advantages. "What's more, in the case of medical tourism, it is very important that there

sufficiently motivated to invest much work in developing medical tourism. Latvian private clinics were content with local patients," says Māris Rēvalds, director of the private ambulatory medical clinic Health Centre 4. Now the situation has changed; Health Centre 4 chose to become a member of the Baltic Care alliance so their flow of foreign patients could be more stable and foreseeable. Before

now, patients found private medical establishments on their own – either based on the recommendations of friends and relatives, or after seeking medical assistance during a visit to Latvia.

"Now is the right time to get to work, and to offer a wide range of opportunities to perform diagnostics, seek treatment, or perform plastic

surgery in Riga," says Dr. Zaržekis. He also indicates that Latvian physicians are well regarded among foreign clients; now the important thing is not only to preserve their good name but also to strengthen their reputation. "That's why Baltic Care is opening branches abroad, where doctors from Riga with special fields of expertise can receive

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A masterpiece of harmony

are many direct flights from the Riga airport, and that Riga can be reached quickly and comfortably, particularly for residents of European countries."

Until now, only a few private clinics in Latvia had applied their efforts to medical tourism, and only on a very small scale. "I must admit that, only a couple years ago, we weren't



patients once a week. Patients meet with them and discuss possible consultations and treatment in Latvia," says Dr. Zaržeckis.

A year ago, Dr. Lukin's Vision Correction Clinic began a partnership with a Norwegian medical tourism company; since then, about ten to fifteen Norwegians have performed eye operations at the clinic each month. Nevertheless, the clinic has become a member of Baltic Care. When asked why his clinic decided to participate in the Baltic Care alliance, Dr. Fēlikss Lūkins says that he is thinking of expanding his practice. "When representatives of the Norwegian tourism agency came to us, they mentioned that good flight connections were one of the main reason why they offered Riga as a medical tourism destination for Norwegians," explains Dr. Lūkins. "Now,

THE BALTIC CARE ALLIANCE currently includes the following clinics:

Dr. Zaržeckis' Private Practice

PLASTIC SURGERY

Jānis Zaržeckis, MD, is a plastic surgeon with 25 years of experience in plastic, reconstructive, and hand surgery. He is also a member of the International Confederation for Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery (IPRAS). The clinic offers plastic surgery of face, breasts, and body; reconstructive surgery; liposuction; and all other plastic surgeries. Also available are treatments and surgeries for hands and periphery nerves, which can eliminate imperfections and problems that have resulted from disease or trauma, as well as restore the sensitivity and use of the palm. More information: www.plasticsurgery.lv

Dr. Lukin's Vision Correction Clinic

LASER EYE SURGERY

LASIK, FEMTOLASIK, or TRANS-EPI LASIK methods – these state-of-the-art technologies allow for complete vision correction within seconds, with quick recovery times. While you're here, let us introduce you to the world's fastest and most precise laser – Concerto – and improve your vision in record time! More information: www.lasik.lv

EGV Clinic

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CLINIC.

Offers the most up-to-date insemination techniques available, including IUI, IVF, ICSI, and TESA. The clinic has the only sperm bank and embryology laboratory in Latvia, and has opened its doors to extensive sperm and egg-cell donation programs. It also offers general gynaecological examinations and treatment, gynaecological laparoscopy surgery, as well as consultations with a highly qualified urologist, psychologist, and sexologist. More information: www.egv.lv

Medical Society ARS

MULTIFACETED TREATMENT FACILITY CONSISTS OF 172 DOCTORS AND CONSULTANTS AND PROVIDES HIGHLY QUALIFIED MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN 38 SPECIALTIES.

Clients have access to the latest diagnostic equipment: 64-layer computer tomography; magnetic resonance imaging (MRI); gamma camera; digital X-ray equipment; and several powerful state-of-the-art ultrasound machines. The first-rate specialists in the ARS out-patient clinic perform gynaecological, orthopaedic, vein, proctologic, and various other surgeries. The dentistry department's highly qualified dentists, dental technicians, and hygienists offer various dental solutions, including teeth implantation. The clinic has a substance abuse service, as well as a rehabilitation and physiotherapy department. More information: www.ars-med.lv

Digestive Disease Centre Gastro

THE LARGEST GASTROENTEROLOGICAL CENTRE IN LATVIA.

Offers a full spectrum of services – from diagnostic and detection to treatment of digestive tract diseases. Comprehensive digestive tract examinations (esophagus, stomach, gut, bile duct, pancreas, and liver). Consultations with certified doctors who offer a broad spectrum of precise, functional diagnostics, as well as effective treatment – some requiring a short visit, others involving up to a day at our treatment facility, as well as return visits. Specialists perform colonoscopies and other endoscopies, using anaesthesia, as well as modern patient-care methods and a full spectrum of medical manipulations. Treatment results can be recorded, stored, and transmitted digitally. More information: www.gastrocentrs.lv

Jānis Ģīlis, MD, Private Clinic

AESTHETIC MEDICINE AND PLASTIC SURGERY.

Dr. Jānis Ģīlis, a plastic surgeon with 25 years of experience in plastic surgery and micro surgery, is the sole representative of The American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS) in the Baltic states. All types of breast enhancement and reconstruction, using implants of the latest technology as well as biodynamic technologies tailored for each woman's individual needs. For men, cosmetic and reconstructive genital surgeries and reversals of vasectomies are also available. The clinic's specialty is the latest cosmetic injections – the newest field of aesthetic medicine – which produces noticeable results, quickly. More information: www.gilis.lv

Valters' Prosthetic Laboratory

THE ONLY OCULAR PROSTHESIS COMPANY IN THE BALTICS

Specialists regularly improve their knowledge and skills in Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. Various cryolite glass and PMMA synthetic ocular prosthesis (artificial eyes), collection eye prosthesis, as well as ecto prosthesis (facial prosthesis) for areas surrounding the eye, including eyelids. Ocular prosthesis are produced from the highest quality raw materials and preparations, all of which are manufactured in Germany and Canada. The laboratory produces individually fitted synthetic or glass ocular prosthesis in one day. 2-year guarantee on the technical durability of our products. More information: www.vpl.lv

following the opening of the office in London, we are thinking seriously about how to develop closer contacts with Stockholm. Of course, we are interested in clients not only from Britain and Scandinavia, but also from Germany, and the former Soviet republics."

Both doctors and medical staff in Latvia are fluent in several foreign languages, because it is important for patients to be able to express their needs and desires without any problems. "I speak fluent English, Russian, and German, as well as some Italian, Spanish, and Norwegian. Right now my Swedish is pretty weak, but when we get more clients from there it won't be a problem to learn that language, too," says Dr. Zaržekis. He adds that the nurses at his clinic also speak several languages. "What's important is our high level of professionalism and our modest prices. It's also important to maintain the good reputation of our private clinics," adds Rēvalds. He also mentions that there is a plan to invest in the training of medical personnel and in new technologies, so that services here could be at the highest possible level of quality. **bo**

Health Centre 4

ONE OF THE LARGEST AMBULATORY HEALTH CARE CLINICS IN LATVIA.

A broad spectrum of diagnostic and treatment possibilities, aesthetic medicine, rehabilitation and beauty care services.

Excellent diagnostic department of the highest caliber, including a modern laboratory with a broad spectrum of diagnostic tools: multilayer computer tomography, magnetic resonance imagery (MRI), X-ray diagnostics, as well as ultrasound, endoscopic, and functional diagnostic services.

The Phlebology Centre is the only institution in the Baltic states where expanded diagnostics and vein treatments, based on Western experience and international standards, are all available under one roof.

The Aesthetic and Invasive Dermatology Clinic is equipped with the widest range of lasers and IPL equipment in Latvia, and offers treatment for all types of acute and chronic skin diseases.

In cooperation with Latvia's most experienced specialists, Health Centre 4 provides patients with a wide range of laparoscopic, arthroscopic, and other highly technological types of treatments and surgeries. More information: www.vc4.lv

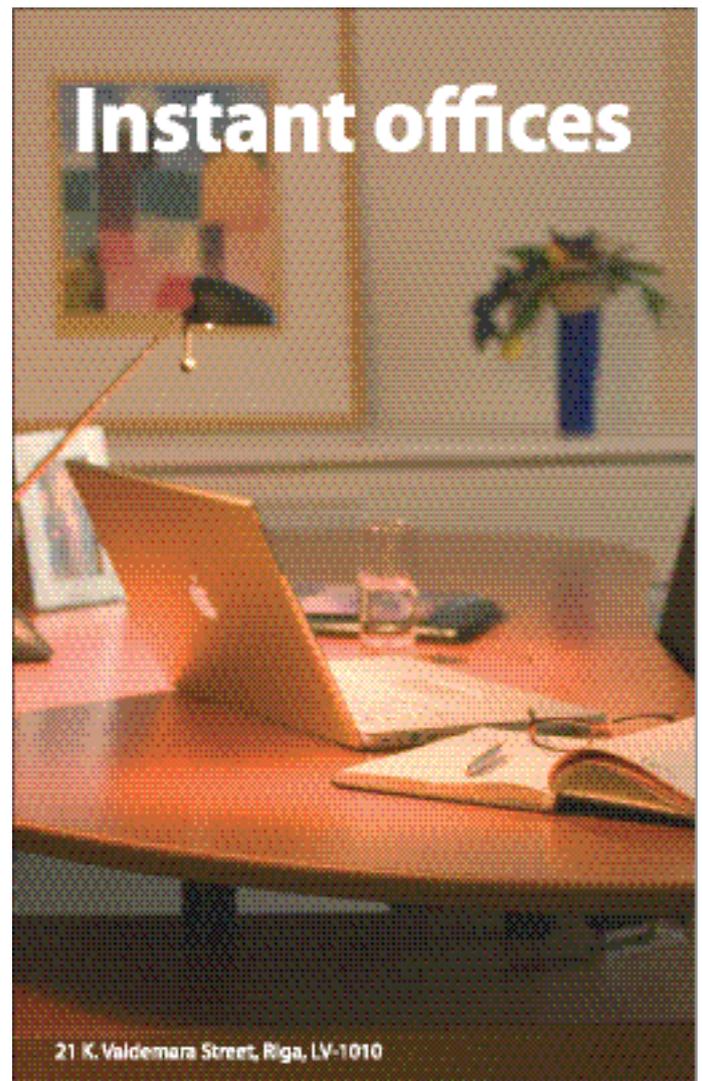
Vanilla Travel

ONE OF THE LEADING TRAVEL AGENCIES IN LATVIA, WITH MORE THAN 14 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE.

A member of ALTA (Association of Latvian Travel Agents) and IATA (International Air Transport Association).

We complete all necessary formalities to assure that your travel experience – dedicated to caring for your health – is secure and comfortable, from booking flight tickets, making hotel reservations, and securing attendants and translator services, to planning enjoyable entertainment.

More information: www.vanillatravel.lv



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