Lessons Learned from Canada

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In this special issue of the World Hospitals and Health Services Journal (WHHJ) of the International Hospital Federation (IHF) we will review some of the key lessons learned from a Hospital Executive Study Tour to Montreal and Ottawa, Canada.

From June 27th to July 1st 2016, the International Hospital Federation (IHF) and Health Investment & Financing hosted a Hospital Executive Study Tour in Montreal, Province of Quebec and Ottawa, Ontario Province, Canada. The objective of the Hospital Executive Study Tour was to allow participants to learn how the Canadian hospital sector addresses some of the key challenges and solutions in order to transform the way hospital care is delivered in the 21st Century. The Montreal Study Tour was part of a series of premier events offered by the IHF. The Study Tour was a collaborative effort among Canadian partner organizations in both Montreal and Ottawa, who hosted various events to enable an exchange of ideas, knowledge, experiences and best practices in the delivery of healthcare services, and in the leadership and management of their organizations.

The Study Tour included visits to leading Canadian policy makers, hospital managers and decision makers, researchers, entrepreneurs, community leaders, and health financing experts. In Montreal, the Executive Study Tour included visits to the following groups:
- Department of Management, Evaluation and Health Policy, School of Public Health, University of Montreal
- Leadership program in Health Care Management, Desautels Faculty of Management, McGill University
- Integrated University Center for Health and Social Services
- McGill University Hospital Center
- Montreal University Institute of Geriatrics; and
- Arbec Health Group

In Ottawa, the Executive Study Tour included meetings with Health Canada; HealthCareCAN, Canadian Medical Association; Canadian Nurses Association; Accreditation Canada; Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI) and Elizabeth Bruyère Hospital leadership.

The participants in the Study Tour included executives and leaders from Albania, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, India, Spain, Switzerland and the USA.

The Montreal 2017 Executive Hospital Study Tour provided participants with a fascinating overview of the Quebec, Ontario and Canadian health care system.

During recent debates on health care reform in the US, the Canadian system has been variously lauded and vilified as either one of the best or worst models that should either be emulated or avoided at all cost. The study tour, the articles in this issue of the World Hospitals and Health Services Journal and other recent reviews of the Canadian health care system shed light on this dichotomy in opinions. Not surprisingly, as the contributing authors to this issue of the journal highlight, the truth lies somewhere between these extremes. The Canadian health care system is an amazing health care system that provide access to quality health services to everyone, at a reasonable cost. No one is excluded. However, like all other health systems in the world there are important trade-offs between quality, cost, access, efficiency, effectiveness and patient satisfaction.

Health care expenditure in Canada is among the highest among OECD countries with their own universal health care system. However, some studies suggest that high spending levels do not translate into equally high health outcomes, financial protection or positive patient experiences.

Therefore the Montreal 2017 Hospital Executive study tour provided participants with a fascinating overview of health care in Canada and lessons learned – both positive and negative – that could be useful to other countries.

For a complete and more detailed description of the study tour, you may download a copy of the complete report from the study tour at the following website: (https://www.ihf-fih.org/activities?type=training&section=study-tour).

The IHF remains committed to providing its members with a rich exposure to the health care systems of other countries. From June 10th-14th 2018, a visit to Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel Aviv has been scheduled, to examine the Israeli health care system. This upcoming Hospital Executive Study Tour will focus on the explosion in innovative technologies, discoveries in life science and new delivery systems that Israel has become so well known for in recent years. For more information about this upcoming event and to benefit from the special Early Bird rate please register at the following link: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/israel-2018-hospital-executive-study-tour-tickets-36955751648