



NATIONAL MEDIA RELEASE
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Hospital stays most expensive in New York City

Start spreading the news... popular holiday destination New York City tops the list as the world's most expensive city for international travellers who fall ill, with three nights in an intensive care unit in the city costing up to a whopping \$64,500.¹

"The US is notoriously expensive for medical costs and is definitely not somewhere you want to get stuck without travel insurance this Christmas," said AAMI National Travel Manager Heather McDonald.

"Many people don't realise each state within the US has a different fee structure for medical expenses," she said.

"For example, hospitals in popular US destinations for Aussie travellers, like California and Florida, charge up to \$8,500 per night in intensive care, while the same treatment in a Hawaiian hospital can set you back up to \$10,500 per night.

"However, New York City is by far the most expensive, with the amount per night priced between \$16,000 and \$21,500.

Cost of a night in a hospital intensive care unit at popular destinations around the world: ²

1. New York City	-	\$16,000 - \$21,500
2. Hawaii	-	\$10,500
3. Canada	-	\$10,000
4. France	-	\$9,500 - \$12,500
5. Germany	-	\$9,500 - \$12,500
6. California	-	\$8,500
7. Florida	-	\$8,500
8. Thailand	-	\$3,000
9. Indonesia	-	\$3,000
10. Vietnam	-	\$2,000 - \$2,500

Ms McDonald said being caught in the US with no travel insurance was not a scenario to be taken lightly.

"We have all heard horror stories of Australians getting stuck overseas without travel insurance. It is just not worth the risk; after all, who wants to come back home with nearly \$65,000 worth of medical bills to pay off?"

"For us adventurous Aussies, paying off a medical bill that size would more than likely mean no overseas holiday stints for a long time to come. Even more extreme is the possibility of bankruptcy for those unfortunate enough to incur massive overseas medical costs."

Ms McDonald said North America and Europe were the most expensive regions for medical expenses.

¹ Highest actual price for three nights in a New York City hospital intensive care unit in AUD based on prices collated by International SOS (Australasia) Pty Ltd (**ISOS**).

² Highest actual prices for nightly stays in AUD rounded off to the nearest \$500, as collated by ISOS.

“Canada is not far behind New York, with costs of around \$10,000 per night, closely followed by France and Germany at approximately \$9,500 to \$12,500.

“The lure of a ‘White Christmas’ in Toronto or Quebec is of course very appealing to Australians, who are used to scorching hot Christmas days. The last thing you want is to have an accident in one of these cities, and then spend your holiday lying in a hospital bed worrying about how you are going to foot the bill.”

Those holidaying in the warmer climes of South East Asia who find they need urgent medical assistance may find the costs slightly less, however they can still add up very quickly after a few nights in hospital.

“Hospital stays are slightly less expensive in South East Asia, with hospitals in Thailand and Indonesia charging around \$3,000 per night for treatment in intensive care, while in Vietnam you could pay up to \$2,500 per night.

Ms McDonald said that when you consider travel insurance to the US costs as little as \$6.90 per day³, it’s a small price to pay for peace of mind.

Prices for South East Asia are even less, with the cost of a 10-day policy to Thailand around \$53.⁴

“The good news is that most Australian travellers do think ahead and choose to protect themselves with travel insurance, but there are still those who are willing to risk it rather take out appropriate cover.”

“We have heard it before but the expression ‘if you can’t afford travel insurance, you can’t afford to travel’ is very true,” Ms McDonald said.

“You should factor travel insurance into your travel budget, just as you would your airfare and spending money.

“If you come back from holidays in debt, let it be because you shopped too much or ate out in fantastic restaurants every night, not because you are paying back a huge hospital bill that could have been easily avoided.”

For travel insurance information visit www.aami.com.au.

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For further information or to arrange an interview, contact:

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³ Premium based on an AAMI International Travel Insurance Policy in November 2009 for a single traveller to USA for ten days.

⁴ Premium based on an AAMI International Travel Insurance Policy in November 2009 for a single traveller to South East Asia for ten days.