

Health Care in Latvia

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Latvia's healthcare sector has recently undergone restructuring and budget cuts aimed at increasing efficiency and facilitating the introduction of additional private healthcare options. The potential of the sector lies in the combination of highly qualified personnel, low costs, and first-rate facilities. Medical tourism is an emerging sector, building on Latvia's reputation as a spa destination, its convenient location, and the availability of high-standard health services at a low cost.

Key advantages

- Recent efforts to improve efficiency.
- Highly qualified workforce at competitive prices
- High standard of health services.
- Promising new business opportunity: medical tourism
- Government support for an efficient and innovative healthcare sector

Since Latvia regained independence, considerable efforts have been made to improve the health care sector's efficiency. The number of hospitals was reduced from 131 to 62 between 2003 and 2018, and specific functions have been delegated to a few specialised institutions.

Health care is still one of the largest sectors in the Latvian economy in terms of employment, with the total figure of 70 080 in 2019. Health care sector accounts for 4.0% of GDP in 2019. National expenditure on health is one of the lowest in the EU 3.41% of GDP (2017). Latvians are used to paying for health care with 42% of health care services paid for by individuals themselves. This could be a facilitating factor in the introduction of private health care services. Currently, one of the Latvian government's initiatives is to increase the insurance coverage provided by the State and to promote private insurance plans.

A promising area is the export of health care services, in the form of medical tourism. Given the competitive salaries, high quality medical services, excellent transport links to major cities in Western Europe, Russia and the CIS, and Latvia's already excellent reputation in Russia as a spa destination, this sector certainly has great potential.

Additionally, the Latvian government supports the sector with initiatives to increase efficiency and by fostering innovative solutions, such as e-health. To resolve the mounting challenge of the ageing population, investment in nursing and social care facilities is planned.

[Wellness Industry Companies in Latvia](#)

Additional information

[Catalogue "Health Tourism in Latvia"](#)

Ministry of Health: <http://www.vm.gov.lv/en>

Latvian Health Tourism Cluster <https://healthtravellatvia.lv/>

Rīgas Stradiņa University (medical institution): <https://www.rsu.lv/en/faculty-medicine>

<https://www.liaa.gov.lv/en/invest-latvia/key-sectors/health-care>