

Working as a medical professional in Panama

Written by T. Rob Brown (aka Roberto Chocolate)

Thursday, 13 May 2010 16:18 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 May 2010 13:55

These are great questions. I have forwarded the medical question it to my doctor, Dr. Eric Ulloa, advisor to the National Minister of Health for a response. I will post his response here.

I do know that opening your own business is very easy in Panama - the government actually wants to help - especially if you are going to create jobs. A scary concept: "I am here from the government - and I REALLY am here to help"???

Roberto,

I have very much enjoyed your humorous stories in The Retirement Detectives. I hope you don't mind me contacting you directly. My wife and I are planning to move to Panama in the near future. I will be utilizing the pensionado program but I don't intend to truly retire. I am an internationally certified Facilities Manager and plan to start a business helping other expatriates maintain and upgrade their homes and businesses. My wife is an Advanced Nurse Practitioner which in the US is a step between a nurse and a doctor. She manages her own family practice clinic treating as many as 20 patients a day. We have not been able to find much information on non-Panamanians working in the medical field. She would be happy to work just as a nurse if necessary. I do know from research and your web site that Panama uses US trained medical personnel, we just can't find if an American could work in the field. Perhaps you know someone we can contact for information concerning this.

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I would like to hire and train Panamanians to work in Facilities Maintenance as well as the installation of building systems such as air conditioning, tankless water heaters, solar electrical systems and water purification systems etc. I have always focused on customer service and in my business Manana will really mean tomorrow.

Any direction you can point us for information would be very valuable to us.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Regards,

Nick

Here is Dr. Ulloa's response:

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In order to work in Panama, you will need to bring all the documents from your nurse training and licensure, and convalidate them at the School of Nursing of the University of Panama. We do not have nurse practitioners, but you probably can work as a nurse. The documents probably need to be authenticated and then translated. You also will need a work permit to work in Panama. There might be opportunities to work in private hospitals, and you may also look at the DOD at the US embassy in Panama.

Feel free to contact for any other information
Eric Ulloa, MD, FACP

Here is my response to the other questions:

Dear Nick,

I am not a lawyer, and hesitate to answer legal questions. It is better to go to the horse's mouth (as opposed to talking to the other end)

My lawyer is Yassar (Alex) Williams Arosemena (Arosemena & Arosemena) His website is:
www.rosemenalaw.com

His e-mail is: awilliams@rosemenalaw.com

He specializes in helping business's start up, forming corporations and foundations, and Pensionado Visa's. He also does real estate law.

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Roberto

PS: Have you had any experience with copper ionization or ozone generation water purification systems? I am just finishing my new 33,000 gallon lagoon-style pool and installing the first truly chemical free pool in Panama.

Roberto

PPS: A word of caution about promising next day service: While you may intend on offering next day service, you will still have to deal with real issues here - like the power going out all day in your area, a bus crash on the InterAmericana that halts all traffic for an entire day and night, etc.

Another uniquely Panamanian example; the national census is this weekend. It is federal law that every single person must stay in their own home all day until they are counted and a permit is issued to allow them to leave their property. That is one day that no-one is showing up to work on my pool - an unexpected delay. It is not laziness that causes the delays. It's life, in Panama. Roberto