

Local

Health insurance on visitors



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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MPs and the government - represented by the health ministry - are seeking to impose health insurance on visitors to Kuwait. The parliamentary health committee referred to the National Assembly a report on health insurance for foreigners and the imposition of fees for health services. The proposal was unanimously approved by members.

The report referred to the amendment of some provisions of law 1/1999 on health insurance for foreigners to include people who come to the country temporarily to the beneficiaries of health services under the health insurance system. It called for the prevention of granting visas to foreigners coming to Kuwait on temporary visits if they do not obtain health insurance covering their duration of stay in the country.

Supporters have said the proposal is an economic project that will bring new resources to the state and achieve several goals, including involving the private sector and the alleviation of pressure on government hospitals. It is universally known that travel insurance is one of the most important types of insurance, yet most people usually hate it and only buy it if forced by the country to which they plan to travel.

This document is a mandatory requirement in many countries. Embassies of European Union countries require a comprehensive insurance certificate covering health insurance throughout the duration of stay. I think it is the right of any country to claim the value of health-care services, whether the traveler needs it or not. The Kuwaiti health minister said some people have been entering the country for years to benefit from health services. Now there is a link between the manpower authority and the interior ministry, and by the beginning of April, the electronic connection will be complete and active, and will show if a person holds valid residency and health insurance.

Some expatriates wonder about the KD 50 they pay annually in health insurance, especially since they are forced to pay additional fees for treatment and laboratory tests. I think it's a worthwhile question. For years, the state has taken health insurance from expatriates, but where are the results of these funds, and what effects these fees have on raising the level of health services?

I know that some people do not like to talk about mandatory health insurance for both visitors and residents, but most countries today don't offer free medical treatment to residents or visitors, and they must have medical insurance to cover their treatment. I believe medical treatment has turned into a source of income for countries and even given the title of medical tourism. I think the entry of the Dhaman company for health insurance will bring positive change, because it will exempt people from paying the KD 50 fee, which does not benefit expatriates, and replace it with real insurance to benefit the holders.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



KUWAIT: The super moon illuminates the sky over Kuwait City. — Photo by Jassem Al-Motar (KUNA)

50% fewer expats in five years? Come on!



IN MY VIEW

by Nejouad Al-Yagout

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I read another disturbing article about expats. This time, MPs are calling on the government to cut the number of expatriates by 50 percent within the next five years. And one of the MPs stated that a reason expats come to Kuwait is for a better life. Well, of course, that's what they are here for. Who else would choose to uproot their lives in their home countries if they had it good? That's why we all emigrate, to find better lives for ourselves and families.

We Kuwaitis know what it is like to live outside our country, but we were quite fortunate that the invasion only lasted seven months. And fortunately, we were treated well by citizens and governments of other nations, because that's what we should do as human beings - let others know that our country is their home away from home.

I cannot bear to read these articles about expats anymore. In fact, while I am writing this, I have tears in my

eyes. Tears for all the families who read the article, wondering whether they are next. Tears for the nativism that seems to have taken effect. Tears on behalf of my ancestors who were ambassadors of coexistence. Tears that in five years there may be fewer expats in my country.

50 percent in five years? Do you know what we could do in five years instead of blaming foreigners for issues that are ours alone? We can focus on sustainable resources, build resorts, enhance tourism, promote women's rights, eradicate discrimination, clean up our sea, reduce the use of plastic and plant more trees. Do you know what we can do in five years? We can improve education, expand the cultural and arts scene and make history as a nation built on love and harmony. So much can be done, but it seems that berating expats is our wag the dog tactic to avoid cleaning up the mess we have made, a mess that can take five years to clean up if we start now.