

# Leading Locations:

*By Kaitlyn Wallace*

There's a fairly straightforward recipe for setting the location of a typical meeting or conference: you look for travel accessibility, for nice weather, for a convention center to fit the profile of your event and a bustling and walkable surrounding area. In short, you look for a location to fulfill the needs of your event. But what changes when your event is healthcare-related? And the needs of your typical event suddenly turn from banquets and presentations to surgical space and cadavers?

Luckily, some locations are stepping up to help you fulfill the specific needs of the medical meeting community – from committees specifically tailored to conferences in the healthcare sector to specialized venues, locations everywhere are boosting their efforts to bring the incredibly lucrative healthcare industry to their cities. In this spirit, here are five techniques that top meetings cities are using to attract medical meetings and events:


## IRVINE, CA: SPECIFICITY

Though a smaller and lesser known city than many others on this list, Irvine, California has made strides in making itself accessible to medical meetings and conferences. Only a 20-minute drive from its larger counterpart, Anaheim (known for attractions such as Disneyland and an impressive meeting space of its own – the Anaheim Convention Center), Irvine is home to several biotech companies and to USC, a leading research university. Most important, however, is the recently opened Axis Research and Technologies facility, designed specifically for medical meeting use. Axis succeeds where most hotels fail, setting up lab space and high-definition video, as well as accommodating one of the more difficult challenges for hotels attempting to host medical meetings— storage and transportation of cadavers. Facilities such as these are one of the most attractive assets for a city looking to expand its healthcare meetings, and have been hugely successful not only in Irvine, but also in similar locations such as Columbia, Maryland.



Cities are using a variety of strategies to attract healthcare and medical meetings. It is, after all, a lucrative sector which brings with it the benefits of tourism, leadership and innovation to any city it may touch down in. This need not be left up to chance, however. By utilizing the strategies outlined above, cities can increase their appeal to the healthcare sector. First and foremost, the specific needs of the medical meetings must be realized, and their importance understood, in order for their requirements to be met appropriately. For this to happen, a plan of action must be made, similar to those made by Philadelphia and Las Vegas, which addresses specific concerns and begin to actively reach out to the healthcare sector for proper communication. Only with the interface of ideas between meeting and healthcare professionals can the specific needs of the industry be addressed. Secondly, those needs must be addressed with specificity; facilities like the Axis Research and Technologies facilities and the Oquendo Center most accurately and effectively fill the niche of medical meetings and are proven to be successful. Once the community's needs

have been understood, the next step is innovation; new and exciting ideas, such as Orlando's Lake Nona Medical City, bring medical tourism and accelerate progress, both of which increase the city's worth to meeting and healthcare professionals. The final needs, expansion and infrastructure, are two sides of the same coin; a city may be made attractive by its infrastructure and made to be more attractive by the expansion of this infrastructure.

These ideas function as steps stones to success, but they also count as signs. They count as signs that the city in question values the medical meeting industry and is eager to attract and work with meeting and healthcare professionals. So next time you're looking for a location, remember: Planning. Expansion. Specificity. Innovation. Infrastructure. These are the qualities that will make a location ideal for any meeting, and that can make your next medical meeting one to remember. 

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