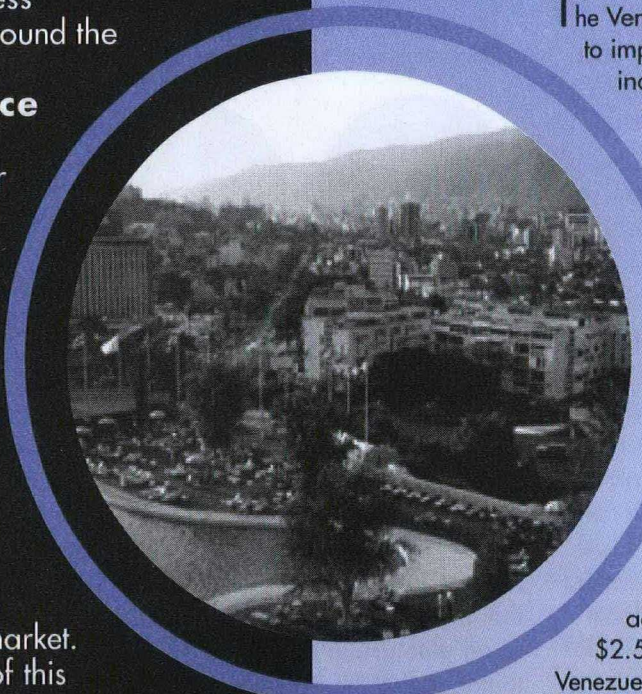


VENEZUELA

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The Health Industries Market

The Venezuelan government's commitment to improving the country's health sector, including upgrading facilities and expanding services, is creating clear opportunities for Canadian suppliers. The health industries market — comprising the health services, medical devices and pharmaceutical sectors — is worth an estimated \$4.4 billion and is projected to grow at an average annual rate of 8%.

Opportunities in Health Services

The health services sector, including direct health-care delivery and peripheral services, accounts for approximately \$2.5 billion of health spending in Venezuela. The largest segments of the market are hospital/clinic support services and alternative site care.

Although domestic suppliers provide the vast majority of health services, there are emerging opportunities for foreign companies to participate in this market. Leading prospects for Canadian suppliers are in facility rehabilitation and construction, health-care management, hospital and clinic

information systems, professional backup services, and continuing education for health-care personnel.

Opportunities in Medical Devices

The medical devices market represents roughly 4% of the overall Venezuelan health industries market and is served almost entirely by imports. Venezuela imported an estimated \$170 million worth of medical devices, equipment and supplies in 2000, up from approximately \$140 million in the previous year.

The largest segments of the import market are electro-diagnostic equipment, x-ray apparatus, and orthopedic appliances, imports of which reached an estimated \$48 million in 2000. Other segments of the market demonstrating strong commercial potential include mechano-therapy apparatus, prosthetic devices and dental drill engines. In general, Venezuelan hospitals and clinics are seeking cost-competitive devices and products that contribute to an overall reduction in health-care costs.



Opportunities in Pharmaceuticals

The Venezuelan pharmaceuticals market had an estimated value of \$1.8 billion in 2000, representing about 6% of the total Latin-American pharmaceutical market. Per capita pharmaceutical spending is expected to reach \$105 by 2003, an increase of 35% over 2000.

Pharmaceutical imports had an estimated value of \$380 million in

2000, close to 63% higher than in the previous year. Key therapeutic categories include cardiovascular drugs, products used to treat conditions of the central nervous system, alimentary tract and metabolism drugs, and systemic anti-infectives. Generic medicines, which offer a clear cost-advantage over brand-name drugs, are growing in demand and could represent an opportunity for Canadian suppliers.

Canadian Position

Canada does not presently have a strong position in the Venezuelan health industries market. However, Canada does rank among the top 10 supplier countries in five categories: medical/surgical sterilizers, mechano-therapy and massage apparatus, ozone/oxygen therapy apparatus, miscellaneous artificial parts of the body, and vitamins.

Canadian companies should stay abreast of government health-care initiatives, especially projects supported by international aid agencies and financial institutions. Venezuela's Ministry of Health and Development, in particular, is investing heavily in the health sector, including funding incremental medical

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equipment and supply procurement at public hospitals.

Market Entry

Foreign participation in the Venezuelan health-care industry is usually effected through a local agent or distributor. Other channels include direct marketing to private hospitals and clinics, and responding to open tenders issued by federal and local agencies.

See Potential?

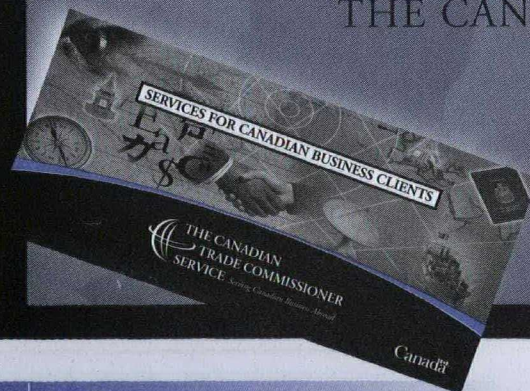
To learn more about this market, read *The Health Industries Market in Venezuela*, prepared by the Market Research Centre of the Trade Commissioner Service. This report and hundreds of others are available on-line at www.infoexport.gc.ca

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