
HOME CARE SERVICES AND RETIREMENT HOMES

The traditional and most common method of home care in Mexico is through families directly caring for their own sick and elderly, but the social conditions which supported this infrastructure are beginning to change. The population is gradually aging and families are smaller. Women, who are the traditional caregivers, are increasingly employed outside the home. More frequently, trained nurses are being hired to take care of sick or elderly relatives.

The increasing demand for home care is creating private sector opportunities. For example, the *Hospital Angeles del Pedregal* subcontracts this type service to a private company that specializes in home care services. Opportunities exist for Canadian companies to work with a Mexican partner in this area.

AMBULANCE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The institutions in the National Health Care System offer emergency services and manage fleets of ambulances. The level of service offered by these institutions is limited in many parts of the country. Few ambulances are equipped as mobile intensive care units and, because there are only limited standards for emergency services, the quality varies widely. The *Cruz Roja*, Red Cross, is another major provider of ambulance and emergency services.

Emergency services are also provided by the private sector. Two companies, *Médica Móvil* and *Emergencia Médica* offer 24-hour emergency services in Mexico City. These companies, and similar firms in other major centres, provide emergency services on a fee-for-service basis coupled with an annual premium. Smaller companies, some using vehicles adapted to serve as ambulances, provide more limited service at a lower price.

There is an opportunity for joint ventures to purchase and equip ambulances for the Mexican market, and to train ambulance personnel in emergency work. For such services to succeed, there will have to be an increased public perception that they are worth paying for.

