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Austin Man Travels To India For Surgery

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Reporting

(CBS 42) AUSTIN With one in four Texans uninsured, some are looking for more affordable health care. Some are searching as far away as India.

It's estimated that 150,000 people from all over the world fly to India for their medical care each year.

Ted Grenier, 45, of Austin has packed his bags and will travel for about 26 hours to Bangalore, India.

"I don't have an option," Grenier said. "I don't have the \$50,000 they're charging for this."

Putting up with severe neck pain is also not an option for him.

"I'm an endurance athlete. I know pain. This is not the kind of pain you can even imagine and it never stops," Grenier said.

So Grenier found Taj Medical Group on the Internet. It arranged a package deal. For \$15,600 dollars, he will have surgery to replace two disks in his neck with artificial ones. That price includes the hospital stay, all tests and medications. It does not include the flight.

If he opted for the simpler spinal fusion, the surgery recommended in the U.S., the cost in India would have been \$6,000 -- about \$30,000 cheaper than stateside surgery.

Grenier is told that Dr. Rajkumar will be his surgeon and that he got his medical license in the United States.

With no hope of getting help here, he is taking his chances on a country he has only read about in books to save him from his pain.

If something goes wrong, Grenier's only recourse will be to sue in Indian court.

But the company he's going through said it has coordinated care for about 800 patients and make sure the hospitals and doctors it uses meet American and British standards.

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