



Amid Medical Visa Expansion, Siam Legal International Explains Extensions

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Siam Legal International, a full-service law firm with more than 22 years of experience assisting foreign nationals in Thailand, is explaining the process for medical visa extensions following the Department of Health Service Support's recent announcement of plans to extend the duration of Thailand's medical visa program as part of the country's broader push to position itself as a global health and wellness hub.

The Department of Health Service Support outlined the plan during International Healthcare Week 2026, as officials pointed to rising global demand for long-term medical stays and recovery-focused travel. The announcement follows years of steady growth in the number of foreign nationals seeking treatment or recovery time in Thailand, many of whom rely on extensions of stay when illness prevents them from departing as scheduled.

Under Thai law, medical extensions of stay are granted under the Immigration Act B.E. 2522, which gives immigration officers discretion to approve additional time when a foreign national demonstrates that they are medically unfit to travel. Extensions are typically issued in 30-day increments, though longer periods may be approved depending on the severity of the condition and the strength of supporting documentation.

Applications are submitted at the local Thai immigration office using the TM.7 form, along with a fee of THB 1,900. The medical certificate is the most critical supporting document, and it must be issued by the treating physician at the hospital providing care rather than a private clinic, as certificates from clinics not directly involved in treatment are generally not accepted.

Patients who are too ill to attend immigration in person are not required to appear. A friend, family member, or hospital staff member may submit the passport and required documents on the patient's behalf, and some hospitals will contact immigration directly to request that an officer visit the patient at the hospital. Hospitals that regularly treat international patients, including Bumrungrad International Hospital, often maintain dedicated staff who assist with 90-day reporting, medical visa extensions, and coordination with immigration officers.

Family members who remain in Thailand to care for a patient may also request an extension of stay. This requires supporting documentation from the hospital confirming the relationship and explaining the caregiving role. For relatives other than a spouse, parent, or child, permission to remain as a caregiver is generally limited to a single accompanying person, and each request is reviewed individually by immigration officers.

For patients whose recovery extends beyond the initial extension period, Thai immigration may continue granting further 30-day extensions as long as the medical condition persists and documentation remains current. Patients on a non-immigrant O medical visa may, in some cases, be eligible for extensions of up to one year when supported by strong documentation from the treating physician. Immigration officials consistently emphasize that complete and updated medical records are central to every extension request, regardless of the visa category involved.

Rex Baay, Senior Immigration Consultant and Operations Manager at Siam Legal International, said that families dealing with a medical emergency abroad often underestimate how much documentation from the treating hospital can affect the outcome of an extension request. He noted that coordination between the hospital's international patient department and the local immigration office tends to determine how smoothly a case proceeds, particularly when the patient is unable to appear in person. He added that cases involving multiple family members or treatment lasting several months typically require closer attention to documentation as circumstances change.

Siam Legal International has published a detailed walkthrough of the medical extension process, including required documents and guidance for family caregivers, in Siam Legal's medical extension guide. The firm noted that as Thailand continues to position itself as a destination for long-term medical care, understanding of the extension framework is likely to become more relevant for a growing number of foreign nationals and their families.

Siam Legal International is a full-service law firm with more than 22 years of experience assisting foreign nationals in Thailand, with offices in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Pattaya. The firm provides comprehensive legal and immigration support across visa planning, property transactions, business law, and litigation.

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