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ON CALL INTERNATIONAL OFFERS TIPS FOR CRUISERS THIS WAVE SEASON

In-House Medical Director for Travel Assistance Leader Aids Cruisers to Smooth Sailing Vacations

Salem, NH – January 20, 2011 – An estimated 14.3 million people cruised in 2010, and strong numbers are expected to continue in 2011.

Most bookings occur during Wave Season, a time during the early months of the year when vacationers book trips at sea to escape the cold weather and to take advantage of promotional incentives offered by cruise lines and travel agents. While cruising remains one of the most relaxing vacation options, travelers must be aware of risks because although emergencies are rare, the unfortunate can occur.

“We never think about the unexpected, especially when planning a relaxing vacation like a cruise,” said Dr. Robert Wheeler, in-house Medical Director for On Call International, a travel assistance company that specializes in emergency medical evacuations. “After many years of working as a physician on cruise ships and facilitating medical assistance cases for On Call and our major cruise line clients, I have seen a wide range of illnesses and injuries that can happen both onboard the ship and ashore.”

The most common risks associated with cruising are illnesses aboard ships, as germs can spread quickly in a confined space. Sea sickness, respiratory infections and food poisoning are frequent, and most medical care at sea is expensive. Outside of the ship, cruisers can also encounter injuries during excursions, which can involve activities such as scuba diving, hiking or jet skiing. Although the cruise ship medical staff is able to provide appropriate services for a majority of the medical problems encountered aboard ship, the more serious conditions may necessitate the disembarkation of the patient to a shore side hospital with more comprehensive medical resources.

“At On Call, our job is to assist travelers who need medical attention and, if necessary, to get the patient home as quickly and as safely as possible,” Wheeler adds.

Wheeler and an assistance team of four physicians respond to more than 7,000 medical cases from On Call members each year.

On Call assists travelers who are more than 50 miles from home, arranging for medical transport, as well as providing a Global Response Center available any time of the day, every day of the year, from anywhere in the world. It is equipped to respond to immediate or special care needs that might not be readily available at a traveler's current medical facility, including emergency medical evacuation – which can cost up to \$100,000 internationally and is often not covered by regular medical insurance – and/or repatriation to the hospital of the member's choice.

Additional medical assistance services range from emergency prescription replacement to worldwide hospital and physician referral and include medical case monitoring and dispatching a physician or specialist in emergencies. The company's 24/7 Nurse Helpline provides medical advice for those traveling and is staffed by U.S.-licensed nurses who assess patient symptoms, identify the urgency of a situation and recommend a plan of care.

Memberships are available for purchase to all types of travelers – from individuals and families to students or faculty and can be purchased directly through the company website. Prices begin at \$55 for single trip coverage and \$225 for annual coverage, and provide service to all members traveling more than 50 miles from home.

For more information about On Call International and the full scope of services provided through a membership, visit <http://www.oncallinternational.com>.

About On Call International

On Call International is a leading provider of medical, security and travel assistance for international business and leisure travelers, as well as expatriates, students and others traveling away from home. Operating 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, On Call International's experienced, multi-lingual team of Assistance Coordinators and in-house Medical Director and team of physicians specialize in delivering life-determining aid during medical emergencies from any point on the globe as well as coordination of transportation home after accidents or illnesses. Available to assist more than ten million travelers, On Call serves the travel, education, insurance and maritime industries. On Call International is the U.S. member of the [International Assistance Group](#), a 32-partner global network of independent assistance companies, including more than 50 alarm centers. For more information, visit www.oncallinternational.com or call 1-888-289-0567.

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