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**The International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ISAPS) Issues Warnings to Patients Regarding  
Unlicensed Practitioners and Medical Tourism  
*Organization Devoted to Promoting Patient Safety Calls for Advocacy and Changes to Global  
Legislation***

**New York, NY (October 29, 2014)** –The International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ISAPS) has issued a warning to all individuals seeking less expensive cosmetic surgical procedures, particularly outside their home country, and especially in the hands of unlicensed practitioners operating without board certification. In light of two recent deaths of UK citizens who traveled to other countries to have cosmetic procedures performed by un-certified practitioners, ISAPS is also calling for global changes in legislation to address these unnecessary and tragic deaths in an effort to insure a higher level of patient safety.

“Cosmetic surgery abroad can be incredibly risky because the standards vary from one country to the next. It is essential that patients find board-certified plastic surgeons, regardless of where they have a procedure performed,” noted Susumu Takayanagi, MD, President of ISAPS. “Patient safety is our highest priority. ISAPS membership is exclusive to board-certified plastic surgeons who must be current members of their national plastic surgery society.”

Over five years ago, ISAPS established a symbol of patient safety, a diamond comprised of four factors that are critical to the practice of safe aesthetic plastic surgery:

- **Procedure:** Choose a procedure that is right for you. Do thorough research and have realistic expectations. If you’re having multiple procedures performed, make sure the surgery can be completed in a safe amount of time. A typical cosmetic procedure can be completed within one to three hours. A combination of procedures should take no longer than five to six hours.
- **Patient:** It is essential that your plastic surgeon conducts a medical screening to determine whether you are at risk for complications or are a poor candidate for aesthetic surgery. Disclose any health issues and/or previous procedures you’ve had.
- **Surgeon:** Choose a plastic surgeon who is board-certified with experience in performing the procedure you would like and who has an excellent safety record. Verify their training credentials with the medical board in the surgeon’s country.
- **Surgical setting:** Standards vary among countries. If your surgery will be performed in a hospital, make sure that the hospital is certified or accredited. Ask for certification information and the name of the certifying body. If an outpatient surgery center will be used, find out if it is accredited by the

American Association for Accreditation for Ambulatory Surgery Facilities International (AAAASFI), an international organization that provides accreditation of surgical facilities, or a similar accrediting body.

“Patients fall prey to unlicensed physicians because of the misconception that anyone with an MD can safely perform any surgical procedure. There is a need for countries to establish strict regulations controlling who can perform plastic surgery procedures and the surgical setting in which they are performed in order to reduce surgical complications and deaths,” noted Michael C. Edwards, MD, chair of the ISAPS Patient Safety Committee and president of the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery.

Nigel Mercer, MD, president of the European Association of Societies of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (EASAPS), deputy president of the British Association of Plastic Reconstructive and Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons, and former president of the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons stated, “Any patient who is planning to travel long distance for aesthetic surgery must be made aware that they are putting themselves at additional risk over and above the risks that they would face finding a certified surgeon closer to home. If they insist on traveling to another country, it is imperative that they choose a licensed surgeon who will provide them with service, post-operative care and advice, not just an operation. The only way to find board-certified surgeons internationally is on the ISAPS website. Patients should also be advised to ask the practitioner what insurance the surgeon carries in case they face complications following their procedure(s).”

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#### **About ISAPS:**

The International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ISAPS) is recognized as the leading international body of board-certified aesthetic plastic surgeons. Founded in 1970, ISAPS' mission is three-fold: continually educating ISAPS members in the latest surgical techniques, accurately informing the public, and promoting patient safety. ISAPS membership includes over 2800 of the world's best known and respected aesthetic plastic surgeons in 96 countries on every continent reflecting the true international nature of the organization. Applicants for membership in ISAPS are thoroughly screened to ensure that they have extensive training in the complete spectrum of surgical and non-surgical aesthetic procedures.

Websites: [www.isaps.org](http://www.isaps.org)

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