

# Diverse Customers: one solution

The world is getting smaller and more and more young people are traveling, working and studying abroad. However these travelers and "global scholars" and their families need to know that they'll be safe and secure whilst away.

**A**VI International, a French family-run brokerage based in Paris spotted a niche for this growing market and over the past 30 years has been providing a special service to schools, universities, language and au pair organizations and individual travelers. The "AVI International Security Passport" provides the reassurance of comprehensive travel insurance and emergency medical, travel and legal assistance.

The company serves over 50,000 people across Europe, USA, South America and Asia and its members can phone two dedicated AVI Hotlines 24 hours a day for a wide range of services: from information with visas and help about lost documents to medical advice and referrals, as well as more serious accidents and emergencies requiring hospitalization or even evacuation. Managing such complexity requires a high level of coordination and a global network.

**"We needed to be confident that our members would be protected wherever they traveled. We chose International SOS because of its capability to provide a comprehensive range of services worldwide,"**

explained Mr. Jean-Luc Guermont, CEO of AVI International. "Medical evacuation in particular is a complex process and few companies have the logistics to implement it effectively."

International SOS is providing all assistance services and is working hand in hand with AVI International's insurer to provide a truly integrated and seamless service. Where medical treatment is required, International SOS provides guarantee of the payment, close medical

monitoring and helps to process their claims is offered.

To meet AVI International's particular needs, International SOS has also set up dedicated project teams at Alarm Centers in Paris and Philadelphia with further support from London.

Amongst the thousands of cases successfully dealt with last year were a French Globe trotter experiencing a leg fracture in Burkina Faso, a Chilean au pair in Ireland who urgently needed to return home after her father suffered from a heart attack and a Lithuanian on a work & travel program in the USA requiring legal assistance after injuring another player during a game of basketball.

A high level of coordination across disciplines and national boundaries was also demonstrated recently when a 24-

year-old American student broke her jaw and teeth after falling while in Lhasa, Tibet. International SOS Alarm Center in Beijing arranged for her and her boyfriend's evacuation to Hong Kong where she received an immediate consultation with an experienced maxillo-facial surgeon and was successfully operated on the same day. Her medical expenses were guaranteed on behalf of the insurer simultaneously. The Coordinating doctor in the Hong Kong Alarm Center monitored her condition throughout her hospitalization. The Alarm Center team handling the case also booked a hotel room near the hospital after the patient was released and arranged for their return flights to Oregon.

"With everyone in shock, it's fantastic to have a team of people thinking about everything, and pulling all of the details together. I am amazed at the incredible level of service and appreciate it from the bottom of my heart", said mother of student evacuated from Tibet by International SOS following an accident.

Whilst wishing to maintain a high quality of care to its customers, AVI



International, like any business, was also in minimizing costs, and were attracted by the capabilities International SOS brings to healthcare management on a global basis. This entails proactively seeking the most cost-effective treatment without compromising the standards of medical care. This is either done through International SOS' preferred providers with which it has negotiated discounts or by ensuring that the cost of the treatment or the length of stay of an inpatient is appropriate. Any reduction in costs can be passed onto AVI customers in the form of lower premiums, making them more competitive in the market. As Mr. Guermont concludes, "We trust International SOS to deliver the

bespoke suite of services we require. We want to offer our clients a worry free experience when they live abroad and we believe that International SOS' dedicated staff will take care of the operational and logistic side of our offering so that we can concentrate on the further development of our business."

The global village may now be a reality, but keeping its citizens happy and healthy will continue to be a complex challenge that AVI International is meeting head-on, with a willing and dedicated partner.