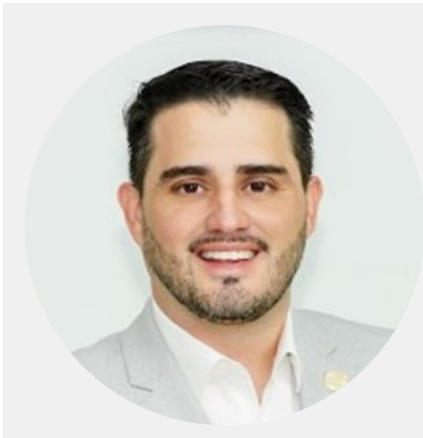


# Carlos Salazar - President, ANAPS; Director General, Medical Expo

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*Carlos Salazar, president of the National Association of Healthcare Providers (ANAPS) and director general of the association's medical device trade event, Medical Expo, discusses ANAPS' role in supporting the medical device industry in Mexico, the stellar growth of the sector, and the influx of foreign investment and the opportunities presented by nearshoring. He also explains the need for updated regulations and standards in Mexico's MedTech sector and the industry trends that will be addressed at the next Medical Expo taking place this month.*

## **Could you please give us a brief introduction to ANAPS, including its vision for the medical sector?**

ANAPS, founded in 2012, began as an association aimed at supporting private medical device distributors and overseeing public tenders to ensure fair practices. Initially focused on balancing tender rules and improving purchasing control within the government, ANAPS has since expanded its role. We now collaborate with educational institutions, universities, chambers of commerce, and various associations to address diverse perspectives and needs within the industry.

Our vision is to create a robust platform that integrates various actors in the healthcare sector, enhancing both public and private healthcare systems. This includes providing a space for distributors and small companies, supporting technological advancements, and fostering economic

growth within the medical device industry.

**What are the main priorities and concerns of your members?**

Over the past six or seven years, there has been a significant shift in the distribution channel for medical devices. Previously, distributors played a crucial role in reaching end consumers, but recently, there has been a push to involve manufacturers and primary importers directly in tenders. This change highlighted the indispensable role of a medical device distribution channel, as meeting the diverse needs across Mexico proved challenging without it.

Currently, one of our primary concerns is ensuring clarity in public procurement rules. Clear guidelines allow companies to plan better and comply with tender processes. Additionally, we face challenges related to regulation, compliance, and logistics. As Mexico is a leading global manufacturer and exporter of medical devices, we must manage this growth responsibly, including addressing international trade agreements and ensuring long-term benefits for investors.

The influx of international investments in Mexico's medical device sector is indeed a significant opportunity. As these investments bring advanced technology and training for local technicians and engineers, we anticipate a positive impact on the industry. This growth can potentially lead to the development of Mexican-branded products and contribute to the economy.

**With Mexico experiencing significant growth in the medical device sector, what are the key challenges the country faces in terms of infrastructure and investment?**

Despite challenges like insufficient industrial land, electricity issues, water shortages, and the need for specialized labour such as biomedical engineers, Mexico's medical device sector is growing at a rate of over 7.6 percent annually, outpacing the global average. The country is preparing to address these obstacles, with universities and the private sector working to meet future needs. Collaboration between the private sector and government will be crucial to maintaining investment confidence and continuing to attract international companies, especially from the US, due to nearshoring opportunities.

**Do you foresee any potential issues with intellectual property protection as the industry continues to expand?**

Intellectual property protection is indeed a crucial issue. While Mexico currently has strong intellectual property rules, ongoing reforms and changes in federal laws could pose challenges. It is essential for Mexico to navigate these changes effectively to safeguard intellectual property while continuing to attract international investments.

Mexico is well-positioned to leverage the opportunities presented by nearshoring and the shifting global landscape. The country's growing medical device sector, coupled with international investments, offers promising prospects. By addressing current challenges and fostering a collaborative environment between the government and private sector, we can ensure sustainable growth and continued success in the industry.

**To what extent is the success being experienced by multinational companies in Mexico being mirrored by the local Mexican MedTech industry?**

The success seen with multinational companies in Mexico is somewhat mirrored in the tech industry, but there are nuances. Mexico excels in manufacturing simpler medical devices, such as disposables. This is an area where Mexico has a strong track record.

However, when we look at MedTech, particularly advanced technologies like telemedicine software and platforms, there is still considerable work to be done. The industry needs to address issues related to norms, laws, and standards to remain competitive.

To give you a sense of where we stand, Mexico is currently the second-largest destination for medical tourism worldwide, following Thailand. This ranking reflects the strong demand for medical procedures in Mexico, with many patients coming from the USA and Canada for surgeries and treatments.

The pandemic has significantly influenced the demand for medical procedures and telemedicine. Previously, patients would travel to Mexico for major procedures and then return to their home countries for follow-up treatments. However, the pandemic has accelerated the adoption of telemedicine, allowing for continuous care and follow-up through digital platforms.

Patients now expect that their procedures in Mexico can be seamlessly integrated with ongoing care from their local doctors through telemedicine. If Mexico does not align its regulations and standards to support this cross-border integration, we risk losing a significant portion of the demand. Other countries with compatible regulations might become more attractive to patients seeking continuity of care.

### **Do you believe it is too early for the new government to address these issues?**

I don't think it is too early. The new government, under President Claudia Sheinbaum, and the incoming Health Minister Dr Kershenobich, are well aware of these challenges. They understand the need for updated regulations and standards in the MedTech sector.

It is crucial that the government, alongside industry associations and chambers of commerce, pushes for these necessary changes. Many regions in Mexico, like Baja California and Mexicali, rely heavily on medical tourism. Therefore, it is in their interest to ensure that Mexico remains competitive and continues to attract international patients.

Mexico needs to adopt and implement updated norms and regulations that facilitate the integration of advanced MedTech solutions, such as telemedicine. This includes creating a regulatory environment that supports cross-border data sharing and continuity of care.

Additionally, there must be collaboration between the government, industry associations, and chambers of commerce to ensure that Mexico can compete effectively on a global scale and continue to attract investment and patients from around the world.

### **Could you provide a brief introduction to the Medical Expo and its development? What is the background and purpose of this event?**

The Medical Expo is a key initiative of ANAPS, aimed at showcasing the potential of medical device companies. It serves as a prominent platform for both national and international stakeholders in the medical device industry.

The primary goal of the Medical Expo is to bring together decision-makers, associations, and companies involved in the medical device sector. It is an opportunity to discuss the future of medical devices while highlighting the contributions of our member companies—primarily distributors and importers of medical devices.

One of the unique aspects of the Medical Expo is our commitment to compliance and standards. We ensure that all exhibitors meet the rigorous standards, regulations, and norms required by our health ministry. To participate, companies must adhere to the necessary regulations and registrations.

This level of assurance means that attendees can engage with companies that are fully compliant and capable of meeting their needs. In essence, the Expo is designed to provide a trusted and reliable environment for business interactions.

Currently, the Medical Expo is primarily focused on national exhibitors. We refer to it as the National Medical Device Fair. While we don't feature international exhibitors in the Mexico City exhibition at this time, we are working towards developing an international component in the future.

The goal is to create a business-to-business international exhibition that will further enhance opportunities for global interactions. For now, our focus is on addressing and resolving the immediate needs of the domestic market, ensuring that attendees can find reliable solutions and partners within the current framework.

**How attractive is Mexico's Medical Expo to the international community, and do you have figures on how many foreign companies are involved?**

The Medical Expo is open to international companies, provided they meet the regulations set by our health ministry. We welcome global companies that can assure compliance with these standards. This openness allows international firms to connect with over 400 key distributors in Mexico and explore the significant opportunities within our medical device industry.

For 2024, we anticipate attracting more than 35,000 professionals to the event, all of whom are involved in or interested in the medical device sector. It is important to note that the Expo is a professional trade show, not open to the general public. It focuses on business-to-business interactions as well as business-to-consumer networking. This includes connections with hospitals, clinics, medical professionals, nurses, and even students, as we aim to foster future growth in the sector.

The Medical Expo is one of the largest events of its kind globally and is the second largest in Latin America regarding medical device training. In 2024, we plan to host more than 300 conferences across 13 auditoriums, with capacities ranging from 500 to 600 people. Our goal is to train at least 12,000 medical professionals through various conferences and workshops.

Last year, we trained over 10,000 professionals, so we are setting ambitious targets for the upcoming year. We collaborate closely with medical associations and educational institutions both in Mexico and internationally to bring cutting-edge techniques, technologies, and regulatory

practices to our attendees.

Additionally, we will be hosting a major congress in partnership with CANIFARMA, one of the leading organizations in the pharmaceutical sector. This event will feature top regulatory institutes from across Latin America, who will share their best practices and insights with participants. This aspect of the Expo highlights our commitment to showcasing the potential of the industry and advancing our collective goals for the future.

**What are the main trends and focus areas for this year's Medical Expo? What can attendees expect in terms of trends in healthcare and medical technology?**

This year's Medical Expo will spotlight several significant trends and focus areas. A major segment of the Expo will address sales, commerce, and government acquisitions. We will delve into the latest regulatory frameworks and compliance standards for medical devices, incorporating best practices from around the world to ensure that attendees stay current with the latest norms and regulations.

In terms of technological innovations, the Expo will feature cutting-edge advancements, particularly in artificial intelligence and new medical devices. We will showcase how these technologies are transforming the industry, from innovative diagnostic tools to advanced treatment solutions, and discuss future goals and developments in these areas.

The Expo will also cover specialized medical practices, with a focus on areas such as diabetes management, orthopaedics, anaesthesia, and respiratory care. We will have dedicated sessions on these specialties, exploring both future management practices and the impact of new technologies and devices on these fields.

Lastly, we will address the economic and industrial impact of the medical device sector. This includes discussions on the implications of nearshoring and its effect on Mexico's economy. We will examine how the growing presence of international medical companies and investments is shaping the industry and contributing to economic development.

In summary, attendees can expect a comprehensive view of the current and future landscape of the medical device industry, with a strong emphasis on technology, regulatory practices, and economic impact.

**As we wrap up, what final message would you like to convey to our global readers about Mexico and its role in the medical device industry?**

Mexico stands out as a highly promising country in the medical device industry. Over the past 14 years, we have seen consistent economic growth in this sector, driven by significant investments in our workforce, including technicians, engineers, and laborers.

Mexico is well-positioned to continue this trajectory, serving as a key partner for US companies and other international firms looking to establish or expand their operations in the region. We are fully prepared to support and accommodate the increasing demands of the American market and beyond.

Our commitment is to work closely with both the government and industry leaders to address challenges and forge agreements that will enhance our competitiveness and clarify the opportunities within this sector. We are confident that, in the coming months, we will provide a clear and compelling vision for the future of the medical device industry in Mexico.

So, if you are considering investing or engaging with the medical device sector, think about Mexico. We are ready and equipped to meet your needs and expectations.

**Is there anything else you would like to add before we conclude?**

I would like to extend a warm invitation to our upcoming Medical Expo, which will be held on October 29th, 30th, and 31st at the World Trade Centre in Mexico City. This is a significant event in the medical device industry, and I am confident that attending will provide you with a comprehensive understanding of our sector's capabilities and potential.

The expo will feature a wide array of activities, networking opportunities, and exhibits showcasing the strength and innovation of the Mexican medical device industry. It is not only a chance to explore the latest advancements but also to engage with a diverse range of stakeholders, including associations, chambers, institutes, schools, universities, and companies that have all contributed to making this event a reality.

We are excited to demonstrate how Mexico is prepared for the future and to show you the tremendous growth and opportunities within our industry. So, come to Mexico and experience first-hand what makes our medical device sector stand out.

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