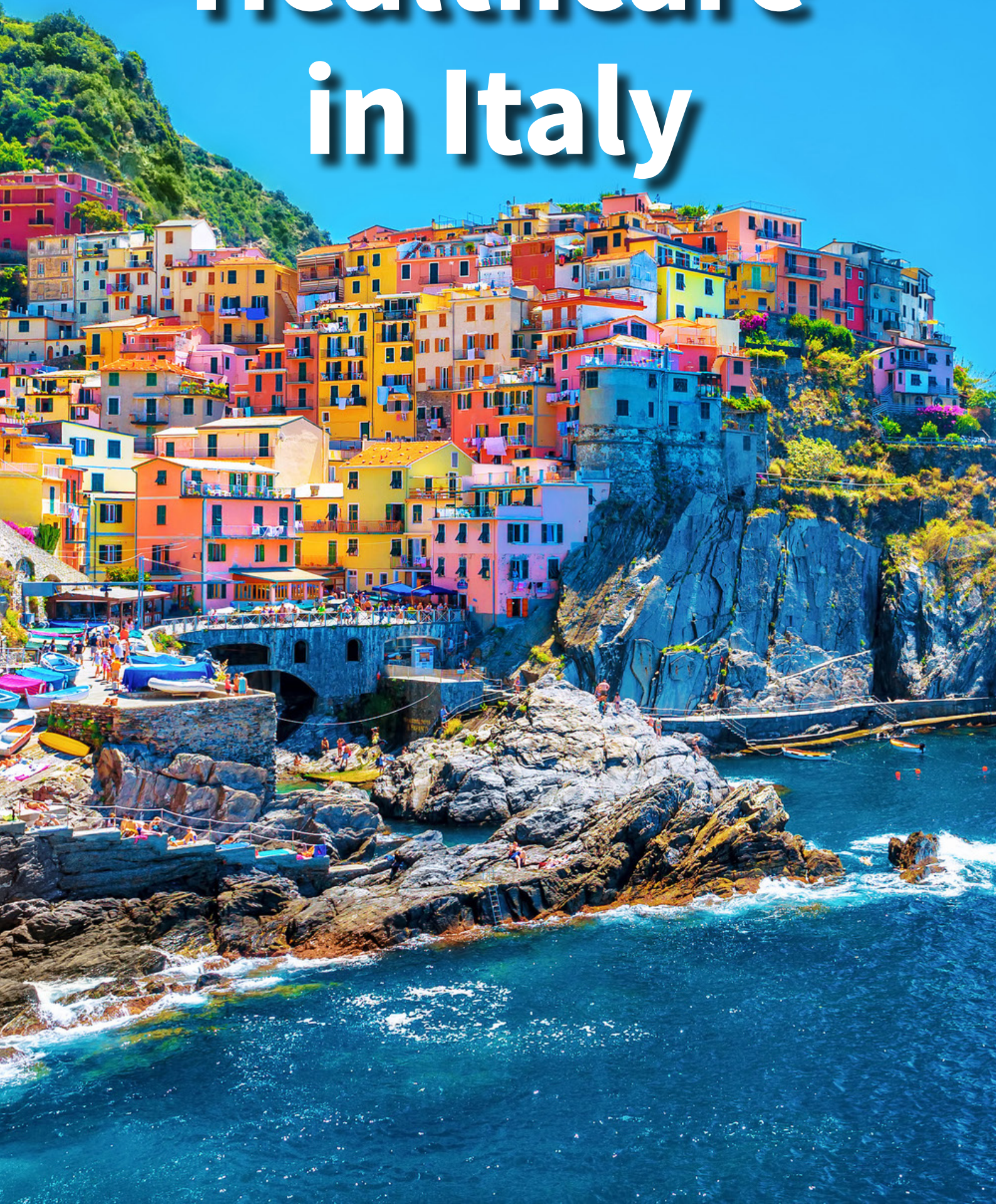


Healthcare in Italy



It shouldn't be surprising that Italy ranks highly for healthcare, since the world's first medical schools were established here (first in Salerno, then in Bologna, which still has one of the premier medical universities). The latest available statistics put the number of doctors in Italy at four per 1,000 people, which is among the world's highest rates. The public healthcare system is extremely affordable, with a very reasonable annual registration fee and subsidized prescription prices.

Like many other European countries, Italy has a public healthcare system as well as a private system. Private healthcare costs can vary by location and facility, though in general costs run significantly less than in the U.S. Many doctors participate in both systems. Except for the tiniest hamlets, every town has a weekday doctor and a *guardia medica* on duty for weekend and holiday emergencies. While some public hospitals are overcrowded and underfunded, this is not the case everywhere. Mid-size cities have good facilities and shorter lines.

Citizens of non-European Union countries (including the U.S. and Canada) must show that they have private health insurance valid in Europe as a requirement for getting a long-stay visa in Italy. Once you have settled in and obtained residence status, though, you can join Italy's public healthcare system.