


Cross-border telemedicine. Testing involves Varese

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 **ALIAS** (Alpine Hospitals Networking for Improved Access to Telemedicine Services), **the network of Alpine hospitals** which unites 7 European regions, started its field-testing today.

In a workshop at the “Circolo e Fondazione Macchi” Hospital in Varese, the regional councillor for health in Lombardy, **Luciano Bresciani**, together with the general director of the hospital, **Walter Bergamaschi** (*photo*), demonstrated the results achieved since the beginning of the cooperation program, in 2009, and presented the field-testing for the provision of tele-consultation services and the sharing of clinical information.

The project, which has cost €2.7 million, and which is jointly funded by the “Spazio Alpino” Program, enables the provision of high level healthcare, also in the most impervious areas. ALIAS sets out to create a large online network, where, by using a common computer platform and telemedicine instruments, the skills of the various medical centres and staff can be shared, to ensure the exchange of medical information and thereby improve the ability to diagnose and treat patients. In other words, thanks to ALIAS, it will be possible to carry out tests for the 80 million people who live in the area covered by the project, in one hospital, and obtain the report or a consultation based on the results in another, more specialized hospital, thanks to the sharing of medical information, and thereby, improve the quality of health care, especially in smaller hospitals, or those in a logistically more difficult position, such as in the mountains.

Councillor Bresciani said, “In the next 12 months, 8 hospitals will be working more closely to provide telemedicine and tele-consultation services.”

The hospitals of Varese (Lombardy), Tolmezzo (Friuli), Grenoble (France), Villach (Austria), Geneva (Switzerland), Izola and Golnick (Slovenia) and Garmish-Partenkirchen (Germany) are forming the hospital network that will try out the project.

The councillor added, “With ALIAS, we accept the great challenge of sharing skills and working as a team with doctors in other regions, and we are promoting a cross-border network that will support telemedicine and enable the access to medical information, which will improve the quality, suitability and safety of the service. With this project, we are laying the foundations for dealing with the growing population of patients that are chronically, or that are affected by several diseases, with lower costs and greater clinical certainty. And we are doing this using a network which shares, among several regions, medical and university know-how, creating conditions that support research

and the academic world, with benefits for the people.”

This testing, which is the final stage of the project, is expected to end in October 2012.

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