

**Il Sole 24 Ore, July 9, 2019**

**AUTHOR: Francesca Cerati**

### **A public-private partnership**

**Global health enterprise UPMC started in Palermo and now manages four centers of excellence in Italy. Its strategy? Provide the best possible care reinvesting profits.**

A Italy-U.S.A. model for nonprofit organizations

It may appear strange that an American health care model is exported to Italy, a country that ranked fourth in the 2018 Bloomberg Health-Efficiency Index, whereas the United States ranked 54th. But UPMC (University of Pittsburgh Medical Center), a U.S. nonprofit organization, is quite an unusual American health system. UPMC is a private provider and at the same time a health insurance system, very similar to the Italian national health system. UPMC currently operates centers of excellence in four Italian regions: Tuscany, Lazio, Campania, and Sicily. "The interests of a system like UPMC and of a public health system are very much integrated", explains Dr. Bruno Gridelli, UPMC Italy managing director and UPMC International vice executive president. "They are not based on profit, but on how to better manage the available resources. In other words, the profits generated by patient care are not distributed between the shareholders, but reinvested to further improve the system, to the benefit of all." Since its creation in the 1970s, in the intentions of its founder, psychiatrist Dr. Thomas Detre, this model focuses on the best management of care, which is not based on volume, but on the value of the clinical outcome. "It all began with a hospital and an academic," continues Dr. Gridelli who, after his Degree in Medicine at the University of Milan, worked in Pittsburgh with Thomas Starzl, the transplant pioneer. "During World War II, when Hungary was occupied by the Nazis and his family was killed in the concentration camps, Dr. Detre sought refuge in Rome where he completed his medical studies at La Sapienza University. He then moved to the United States, in Yale, and later became Chair of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh, one of the most advanced in the country. In collaboration with Jeffrey Romoff (current president and CEO of UPMC) Detre entered into agreements with universities and various hospitals, creating the UPMC system." A virtuous circle that was able to take root in Italy thanks to 1992 health care reform that supported public-private partnerships as management experimentations. In addition to the hospital network, UPMC is a founding member of the Ri.MED Foundation, established in 2006 from a partnership between the Italian Government, the Region of Sicily, Italy's National Research Council (CNR), and the University of Pittsburgh. "The idea was to reproduce the efficient model of ISMETT (*Editor's note: the transplant center in Palermo, established in agreement with the Italian NHS, celebrating the 20th anniversary of its first liver transplant next Thursday*) in the area of biomedical research," said Dr. Gridelli, who served as ISMETT director between 2009 and 2016. "The biotech market is constantly growing, and has continued to do so even in times of strong economic crisis, since it turns scientific discoveries into products of clinical and commercial value, with a positive impact on social and economic growth." The Italian Government allocated millions of Euros to the Ri.MED Foundation obtained by the Fund for Development and Cohesion (previously, Fund for Underutilized Areas), which is often lost due to the lack of projects. UPMC's idea was to build in Sicily a Biomedical Research and Biotechnology Center (BRBC). Just last week, the Ri.MED Foundation board of directors awarded the construction works of the BRBC on a land of 180,000 square meters in Carini, near Palermo. The 30,000 square meter-building, which should be ready in two years, will employ approximately 600 people. "The BRBC will generate new discoveries and products for health care, attracting new business in the sector," commented Dr. Gridelli, who is also vice president of the Ri.MED Foundation. "This will have an enormous impact on the social and economical growth of Sicily and of the rest of Italy.

Many young Italian scientists will have the opportunity to remain in or to return to their country and work in one of the most advanced research centers in the world.” In his role, Dr. Gridelli supervises the clinical and scientific activity of UPMC international centers not only in Italy but also in Ireland, Kazakhstan, and China. “In Kazakhstan we are collaborating with the Nazarbayev University to create a national center for cancer treatment and research. In Italy and in Ireland, where we have been operating for longer, we're not just advisors but we direct invest.” In Italy, UPMC has already reinvested €40 million. Once a surgeon, now a manager: any aspects in common? “When I was a surgeon, my goal was to use the available resources, in that case organs, successfully and in the best possible way. An approach of managing resources in a transparent and efficient way is precisely what should inspire the management of health systems. When a health system is managed well, thousands of patients have a chance of receiving better care. It’s a different way of providing patient care.” Different, but not that different.

Bruno Gridelli Executive Vice President, UPMC International, Managing Director, UPMC Italy

## **HEALTH CARE NUMBERS**

### **\$19 Billion - Turnover**

UPMC, a global nonprofit health organization headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

**40 hospitals** with more than 8,000 beds and 85,000 employees in western Pennsylvania.

### **€40 million - Investments**

Amount invested in Italy by UPMC as of today.

## **THE FOUR REGIONS HOSTING UPMC CENTERS: SICILY, LAZIO, CAMPANIA, AND TUSCANY**

### **1 PALERMO**

#### **Transplants**

For two decades, UPMC has been managing the Istituto Mediterraneo per i Trapianti e Terapie ad Alta Specializzazione (ISMETT) in Palermo, a center for organ transplants (over 2,000 transplants performed until today) and highly specialized therapies serving the entire Mediterranean area. The new ISMETT 2 will be created near next to the Biomedical Research and Biotechnology Center (BRBC) of the Ri.MED Foundation. The BRBC will hire 600 researchers, technicians, and administrative staff, and is expected to be completed in two years.

### **2 ROME**

#### **Cancer Center**

Two centers in partnerships with UPMC are currently operating in Rome. One is Salvator Mundi International Hospital (SMIH), created to carry out investments and collaborations in the private health care sector for national and international patients, attracting more patients in Rome, extending the catchment area to Europe and the Mediterranean. At SMIH, an integrated Oncology Center will be created, connected with the UPMC Cancer Center network. The second is San Pietro Fatebenefratelli Hospital, hosting the Advanced Radiotherapy Center treating both private and NHS patients.

### **3 MIRABELLA ECLANO**

#### **Radiation oncology**

UPMC Hillman Cancer Center Villa Maria is an advanced radiotherapy center for treatment of primary, secondary (metastatic) and recurrent tumors in all body districts. It was established in 2018. The Center is provided with one of the most advanced linear accelerator, TrueBeam STx, able

to deliver high doses of radiation more quickly and precisely, allowing for shorter treatments, and radically minimizing the onset of side effects.

#### 4 CHIANCIANO

##### Preventive medicine

An advanced and highly specialized center with a special focus on primary and secondary prevention of cardiovascular, hepatic, and metabolic conditions. UPMC Institute for Health Chianciano Terme offers its patients personalized care. Complete check-ups with screening programs, nutrition education programs, physical exercise, and tutoring developed in Pittsburgh. This is a private center with cardiac rehabilitation programs accredited with the Region of Tuscany, that should also add neurological rehabilitation.

##### The value of integrated medicine

