Fondazione I.R.C.C.S.
Istituto Neurologico Carlo Besta

Sistema Socio Sanitario
Regione Lombardia

Microsoft

MICROSOFT AND THE CARLO BESTA NEUROLOGICAL INSTITUTE: CLOUD COMPUTING TO BROADEN THE SCOPE OF TELEMEDICINE DURING THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY AND IN PHASE 2

Thanks to the Microsoft 365 collaboration platform, and in particular to Teams, Besta Institute guarantees continuity of care to patients who can follow treatment and rehabilitation programs, even from a distance.
The goal: to reduce the risk of infection in line with social distancing measures
and, at the same time, limit collateral damages connected with the interruption of in-person visits and check-ups.

Milan, May 26, 2020 – **Microsoft** and the Foundation **Carlo Besta Neurological Institute for Treatment and Research (IRCCS)** are working together to guarantee continuity of care during the health emergency that is currently affecting the whole nation. With its long-term commitment to innovation, the Neurological Institute "Carlo Besta" has, in fact, chosen to bet on Microsoft's **Cloud Computing** to enable a comprehensive **telemedicine** program which, following the pilot stage from February to May, will now be broadened to all the Institute's chronic patients to optimize security also during phase 2. Thanks to the use of **Microsoft 365** platform and, in particular, of **Microsoft Teams** collaboration hub, it will be possible to manage all communications with follow-up patients within an integrated environment that enables audio-video interaction for online visits and the exchange of clinical documents, safely and in real time.

Founded in 1918 and headquartered in Milan, the Carlo Besta Neurological Institute is a world-class health and research institution. As a national and international healthcare and research center in neurology, neurosurgery and pediatric neuropsychiatry, **over 60%** of the patients of the Neurological Institute "Carlo Besta" **come from other regions of Italy and Countries**. Therefore, not only residents of the Lombardy region, but also those in the rest of Italy and abroad were severely hit by the government's measures to contain the spread of the virus, since they have been unable to travel for routine check-ups and visits, with serious consequences on health and social level, given the complexity of the healthcare situation and the need to provide continuity of care in neurological areas in which progress is often the fruit of constant, long-term treatment.

With great foresight, the Besta Institute's clinical and IT teams decided to leverage technological innovation to boost the telemedicine experiences already in use in a simple and immediate way, to maintain continuity of care and allow patients to easily connect online for check-ups and visits with the doctors who have been treating them. **Microsoft 365** productivity platform and **Teams** collaboration hub enabled a new system of online visits which, following a pilot phase in the Rare Diseases, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's and Pediatric Neurology departments, was extended to all clinic areas. Leveraging a **smarter and totally secure data management**, thanks to the guarantees offered by Microsoft Cloud in compliance with GDPR and privacy and cybersecurity regulations, the Neurological Institute "Carlo Besta" is also working to improve its service and research to enhance its approach to personalized medicine.

The Neurological Institute "Carlo Besta" is working with Microsoft to integrate Teams into the **hospital booking system**. In this way, the administrative staff and doctors will be able to offer a **double option** when scheduling each visit—in person or online—and if the patient chooses the online option, an e-mail with a link to connect to the visit and a second reminder will be sent. Using Teams, patients are already able to **safely share documentation** with their doctor and fill out the **informed consent form**. Also interesting is the use of this tool to create questionnaires and **Microsoft Forms**, thanks to which a form to gather patient feedback was developed. During the lockdown, online visits were the only possible mode with patients throughout Italy. This made it possible to guarantee continuity of care, as well as to monitor the most fragile patients during an especially difficult time, while maintaining the security of citizens and healthcare staff. Also significant are the benefits in terms of **the clinic's efficiency** and **savings in transport costs** borne by patients. As a result of the simplicity of Microsoft Teams, the **response from doctors as well as patients has been very positive** and, considering the duration of the emergency, this tool has been extended to all departments in the Institute and over 500 visits have been conducted since the end of March.

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"The Telemedicine project was always part of our development plans as a secondary mode for accessing our healthcare services. But, overnight, things changed completely and the availability of a digital platform to manage patients became an indispensable part of our activity. Many of our patients suffer from chronic conditions that require frequent check-ups with our specialists. The healthcare emergency reduced the possibility of traveling for these visits, which increased the number of phone calls and e-mails from patients to our doctors. So, we decided to accelerate our telemedicine project while basing ourselves on two principles: simplicity and speed. Thanks to the Microsoft platform, we were able to equip our doctors and patients with solutions for communicating quickly and easily in all phases, from scheduling appointments to the management of the visit itself", said Andrea Gambini, the Foundation's president.

"We are proud to collaborate with the IRCCS Carlo Besta Neurological Institute, a beacon of healthcare and research excellence in Lombardy and in the Country, which demonstrates the importance of having a strategic line which takes into account technological innovation as a tool in support of healthcare challenges. The Besta project highlights how it is possible to turn a crisis into opportunity, not only while reacting directly to the emergency, but also in the subsequent restart phase. There are many unknowns the public health system must still face and, unfortunately, added to the risks of Covid-19 are those connected with a more complicated management of medical check-ups and delays in treatment. This is why telemedicine represents an answer in guaranteeing patient care and treatment continuity. There is no need for futuristic solutions. The technology required is already available and the simpler it is, the better the response from doctors and patients. With our Microsoft 365 cloud ecosystem and Microsoft Teams collaboration platform, we are helping many Italian companies and entities to manage at best the complexity of this moment, by enabling smart working and telemedicine experiences with an intuitive interface and processes in-line with the most advanced standards of security and privacy", declared Silvia Candiani, CEO at Microsoft Italy.