

VareseNews

Thirty Thousand people in Switzerland for treatments

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The number of foreign patients that pass the border every year to have medical treatments in local facilities **are about 30,000**, according to the estimates published on the website **Swissinfo**.

This is a very important field for the Swiss economy which manages a capital of millions of francs. We can read in the data spread by **Swiss Health** (platform created by Osec and Switzerland Tourism to promote their health services outside the Swiss borders), that a medical treatment **can reach also 20,000 francs** per day. And that is not all. We have to add the overnight stays of those that accompany the patients, the catering and any additional costs and purchases in the area.

The same "Swiss Health" website describes Switzerland as a "health destination" which looks to "patients orientated on an international level towards the highest standards of quality". We can read in the description of the offer that the stay "is characterised by an atmosphere of calm and peace, in a wonderful and uncontaminated nature". In short, it is a studied promotion, addressed to potential patient-tourists and to their own relatives, which materialises also through the participation of the facility in international fairs of this specific field, where it is easy to meet clients from **Saudi Arabia, Russia, China**.

Also in **Canton Ticino**, where there are more than twenty private hospitals, this phenomena is widespread. A large part of their clients, in this case, come from Italy. And in these facilities the regard for foreign countries is very high; all the more they are in a border region, as **Jèrôme Puginier**, director of the services of hospital group [Ars Medica](#), explains: "Our group – he clarified in an interview with VareseNews – has always aimed also at foreign clients: our foreign patients **mostly come from North Italy (Lombardia and above all Veneto)** and for some years Russian patients have been increasing."

Ars Medica, for example, have the permission for orthopaedic and locomotive system surgery (with the Ars Medica Clinic) and for the disciplines connected to female health (gynaecology, obstetrics), for surgery, internal medicine, oncology (with Sant'Anna clinic). "The amount of patients coming from abroad" continues Puiginier "is **more than 5% of all our patients**".

What is the reason that drives an Italian person to turn to a foreign Health Service? According to the Manager, the reason must be a combination of quality and attention: "At a national level, Switzerland can be said to be internationally well-known because it has one of the best Health Services in the world: it has first-rate quality of treatments,

up-to-date infrastructures, almost no waiting lists... At the regional level, **one of the advantages of Canton Ticino is certainly the geographic and cultural nearness** to Northern Italy. The Italian patient, who comes to our clinics to be treated, appreciates our constant attention to details, our refined hotel offer, the calmness, the absolute discretion, and last but not least, the chance to express himself and talk in his mother tongue. We have noticed that our patients are increasingly establishing a virtuous word-of-mouth advertising among their friends and relatives.”

Besides the care of the patient, the Swiss structures have developed a related strategy based on the hotel quality: “Apart from guaranteeing excellent medical care in avant-garde structures, we need to **care for all the services dedicated to the patient-client** and to try to fully please every one of their requests. The quality of the hotel plays a prominent role: in our clinics, for example, there is the possibility to choose among different menus, there is a customised dietary service, comfortable and air-conditioned rooms with beautiful views on the lake or garden. But the hotel service is only one of the elements, even if is very important, of a series of services at the patient’s disposal: a reception that is able to assist the patient, a physiotherapy service endowed with a medical swimming pool, a psychological service and an information line.”

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