

VareseNews

The flu spike is coming, here is the Region's plan

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The emergency rooms have been in difficulty for days now (here are the situations in the **south of the Province** and **Varese**), but the flu spike has yet to come. In order to face it, the Region has laid out new, extraordinary measures, involving GPs and the local health units, seeking support in the private health sector and in nursing homes.

The spike “**should occur between this weekend and next week,**” said **Giulio Gallera, Lombardy Region's Councillor for Welfare**, who explained that “Lombardy Region has implemented a number of initiatives involving general practitioners and the local health units, to try to stop overcrowding in the emergency rooms.”

Over the last 10 days, overcrowding has already affected most emergency rooms, 41% of the general ones and all of the paediatric ones, with peaks of over 12,000 people.

What will the response be to this critical situation? The councillor explained, “Particularly, with the health protection agencies, **especially those most affected, like Milan and Varese**. We've asked the GPs to **make home visits** and the local health units to implement all measures contained in the overcrowding management plans, also by **blocking or postponing elective admissions, for scheduled operations.**”

A few months ago, the Region already allocated €4,000,000, which allowed the local health units and public research hospitals that have emergency rooms, and high speciality emergency units to **increase the number of beds by temporarily increasing those in the medical and surgical units** and units for subacute admissions, by using the beds made available by health facilities accredited and contracted in the allocated budget, and by establishing agreements with nursing homes, to take subacute cases.

“We're aware that **the situation is the result of ineffective management of the territory,**” the Regional Councillor for Health said, “above all of patients over 65 (who, on average, represent 30% of the people who go to casualty departments, and as much as 40% in the period from 22 December to the middle of January), affected primarily by breathing difficulties that require several days in hospital. We aim to solve this problem by increasing awareness of anti-flu vaccination among this category of people and **implementing health reform**, which has already started, and which **will provide personalised monitoring of chronic patients**, and thereby prevent their need for hospital treatment due to the absence of GPs, which normally occurs during the holiday periods.”

di Translated by Cerimedo & Tognoli (Reviewed by Prof. Rolf Cook)