

COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY – CARING FOR HEALTHCARE HERITAGE AS A HEALTH PROMOTION STRATEGY

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BACKGROUND AND AIM

Healthcare institutions hold a widespread historical heritage (architectural, artistic, archival, and library assets), often under-recognized within contemporary healthcare systems dominated by technological paradigms.

This project, developed by the Documentation Centre for the History of Healthcare in Piedmont (Italy), aims to valorize healthcare heritage as a strategic resource for community engagement, cultural participation, and health promotion.

The initiative aligns with a humanistic approach to medicine, strengthening the relationship between healthcare institutions and citizens.

METHODS AND INTERVENTIONS

A regional network involving all 19 Local Health Authorities in Piedmont was established to conduct the first systematic mapping of healthcare heritage (76 hospitals surveyed).

Outputs included the digital publication “Community and Identity” and the exhibition “The Heritage of Care. Caring for Heritage”, hosted in the former San Luigi Hospital (now State Archives of Turin).

The exhibition was structured into seven narrative domains (physician, patient, benefactor, religious figure, pharmacist, artist, architect), using a storytelling approach to enhance accessibility and engagement.

Inclusive actions were implemented, including accessibility measures for people with sensory disabilities and a cultural welfare program for individuals with aphasia, based on reminiscence and narrative tools.

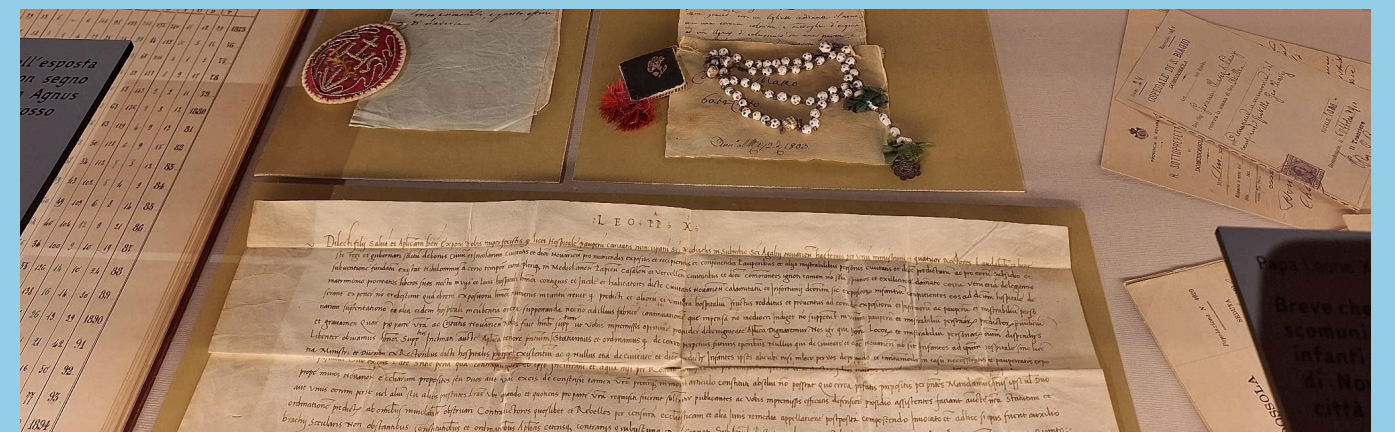


RESULTS

The project achieved:

- the first comprehensive regional mapping of healthcare heritage
- full institutional engagement across all regional health authorities
- accessible dissemination tools (digital and exhibition formats)
- implementation of cultural welfare interventions

Preliminary outcomes indicate increased awareness of healthcare heritage as a community asset and enhanced social participation and well-being.



Download the e-book!

CONCLUSIONS

Healthcare heritage represents a strategic asset for the humanization of care, integrating cultural, social, and relational dimensions into healthcare systems. Hospitals emerge not only as places of treatment but also as spaces of memory and identity.

RELEVANCE FOR HPH

The project is consistent with Health Promoting Hospitals principles:

- promoting health through cultural engagement
- strengthening community empowerment and participation
- supporting holistic, person-centered care
- contributing to health equity through accessibility

Healthcare heritage can act as a lever for cultural welfare and psychosocial well-being.



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