

In collaboration with UNEBA



ECCOMI!

A COMMUNICATION CHANNEL ALWAYS OPEN TO FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY

- A new possibility of dialogue between guests and their loved ones facilitated by digital tools
- The project promoted by Fondazione Amplifon, Cisco, Durante and the Municipality of Milan, with the support of UNEBA Lombardia, brings advanced remote presence solutions to ten healthcare residences in the city, making them always available and involving 2100 elderly people
- EccoMi! was launched to cope with the current health situation but looks to the future to expand the possibilities of relations between residential healthcare facilities (RHF) and the community

Milan, 3 November 2020 - Technology and affection enter ten RHF in the Milan area, with large screens and powerful connections to bridge the gap between elderly guests and their loved ones. EccoMi! was presented today at a virtual press conference attended by the **Mayor of Milan Giuseppe Sala**, the **Councillor for Social and Housing Policies, Gabriele Rabaiotti**, the **General Manager of Fondazione Amplifon, Maria Cristina Ferradini**, the **CEO of Cisco, Agostino Santoni** and the **President of UNEBA Lombardia, Luca Degani**: the project promoted by Fondazione Amplifon, Cisco, Durante and the Municipality of Milan, with the support of UNEBA Lombardia, has been created to offer guests in healthcare facilities new means of communicating with their families.

Starting today in ten facilities for the accommodation and care of the elderly, there is a Cisco Webex DX80 remote presence station: a solution that offers people, via a 24-inch screen, the possibility of communicating with their loved ones in video and audio using simple commands, like making a phone call, and with a very high image and sound quality for a “joint-presence” experience very close to dialogue in person. Guests’ families can use any device connected to the internet at their end: smartphone, PC or tablet.

The systems are installed free of charge and each RHF, and remote users, get continuous assistance thanks to the collaboration with Durante, which has signed an agreement with Fondazione Amplifon for the management and maintenance of the systems and to facilitate communication between RHF guests and their families.

“In these last months because of the pandemic - declared the **Mayor of Milan, Giuseppe Sala** - the elderly, especially if guests of RHF, have had to live separated from their loved ones without meeting or embracing them. A necessary choice to protect them from the virus, but at the same time a source of great distress for them and their families, forced to see and talk to each other only through the small screen of a smartphone. Now - continued the Mayor Sala - thanks to the initiative and generosity of Cisco, Durante and Fondazione Amplifon, the meetings, although still remote, can take place on large and sharp screens with enhanced audio. It’ll be almost like seeing each other and talking face to

face. I therefore thank these three companies - concluded the Mayor - for the gift made to the elderly and to our facilities. They have made a practical contribution in a very difficult period to improve the days of those who, at this moment, really are more fragile and alone”.

EccoMi! is an effective model of collaboration between the public and private sectors, combining the strengths of their complementary skills and know-how makes it possible to rapidly launch initiatives that help institutions to respond to new needs, opening a dialogue with all those involved. The project has also been implemented in constant dialogue with UNEBA, an association that brings together about 1,000 organisations in the social and healthcare sector throughout Italy, 400 of which are in Lombardy: almost all of them are Christian-based non-profit organisations, the majority of which are structures for the non-self-sufficient elderly.

“This is an initiative that seeks a practical solution to the needs of many elderly guests in nursing homes and RHF’s - explained **Maria Cristina Ferradini, Managing Director of Fondazione Amplifon**. The lockdown has led to a situation of prolonged isolation, which must be fought with all our strength not only because it affects the quality of everyday life and serenity, but also because it can also generate problems of a cognitive and relational nature. Enabling an elderly person to talk and see their loved ones in a simple and immediate manner has an immense value that affects their well-being and general state of health”.

For the future, according to the intentions of the promoters and in particular of the project leader, Fondazione Amplifon, the EccoMi! project could also be extended to other Italian cities.

According to **the CEO of Cisco Italia, Agostino Santoni EccoMi!** “highlights very clearly the value of technology as an opportunity to improve people’s lives. Our daily work aims to enable institutions, companies and communities to exploit the full potential of digital technology for their needs while helping to create a more inclusive world with a great goal, which can only be achieved by networking: EccoMi! is an example of how to connect resources and skills in a profitable manner to create a positive impact”.

As a further initiative in favour of RHF guests, Fondazione Amplifon and Cisco intend to propose to their employees, as part of their corporate voluntary activities, to make time available for video calls and friendly chats with resident elderly guests.

“When Fondazione Amplifon and Cisco proposed experimenting remote presence in the RHF with a loan for the use of technological tools and their free technical assistance, we greatly appreciated it – commented **the Councillor for Social and Housing Policies, Gabriele Rabaiotti** – In RHF’s we see all the delicacy and the complexity of the pandemic, but we have also seen in the managers the determination, the attention and the professionalism necessary to manage this very important service in the safest way. In addition to caring for elderly guests, it is important to ensure contact that can bring them closer to family members, relatives, friends. It is a crucial digital bridge, which tells us that we must strive in every possible way to maintain relationships between guests and their families”.

“I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Fondazione Amplifon, Cisco, Durante and the City of Milan – declared **Luca Degani, President of Uneba Lombardia** – The remote presence system will allow hundreds of elderly people and their families or friends to feel a little closer even now when they are forced to stay apart to protect each other from illness. Once again, the commitment of the women and men who work for the RHF’s will be essential to help the elderly use this gift that the facilities have received”.

The RHF involved in the project are **Gerosa Bricchetto, Famagosta, Pindaro, Ferrari, Casa dei Coniugi, Fondazione Biffi, Piccola Casa del Rifugio, Istituto Sacra Famiglia, Istituto don Gnocchi, Casa Verdi**.

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