



OMNITEL VODAFONE : SMS FOR BLOOD DONORS

Sirchia: Public/private sector collaboration a great resource

Milan, October 1, 2001 - Omnitel Vodafone and the Association of Blood Donators Friends of Milan Polyclinic have created a unique service of its kind to contact the 16,000 volunteer donors in the province via SMS.

The service was presented yesterday at Milan Polyclinic during the farewell meeting for the director of the Transfusion and Transplant Immunology Center, Prof. Girolamo Sirchia, a firm supporter of the service who is now Minister of Health.

The SMS message service Omnitel has created allows the Association, through its databank, to manage and send the same brief text message directly to all blood donors' mobile phones simultaneously in real time.

The Association can also verify in real time whether or not the message has been received and keep check of the mailshots carried out. In addition, donors will soon be able to send an automatic response confirming their support.

The service began operating on October 1 and is completely free and available to clients of all cell phone operators.

Before the project was completed, communication and contact with donors took place via fixed-line calls which involved a great deal of time and energy and offered no certainty that donors would be contacted in real time.

Experiments carried out during July and August have already led to important results. The first messages sent to provide information on the new service reached several hundred blood donors and allowed for greater efficiency in the planning of blood donation.

Omnitel Vodafone and the Association have also agreed to assess the feasibility and subsequent realization of future projects based on new multimedia technology (GPRS and UMTS).

*"Collaboration between the public and private sectors in public utility management, in particular in the field of health, - said **Prof. Girolamo Sirchia**, Minister of Health - is a great resource which, as the results of this experimentation prove, can lead to useful and innovative applications".*

*"The development of a modern, efficient system for the management of communication with blood donors is cause for pride - declared **Vittorio Colao**, managing director of Omnitel Vodafone - With the realization of this project we have maintained our commitment to combine advanced technology with the concrete management of information services of great public and social usefulness.*

The innovative system was also presented at the 8th "International Colloquium of the Recruitment of voluntary non-remunerated Donors", held at the beginning of September in Johannesburg (South

Africa) by Dr. Giorgio Marmiroli, and aroused considerable interest among the representatives of those countries where mobile phone telephony is more advanced.