Healthcare System in Argentina

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INTRODUCTION
Argentina is a developing country, Ranking No.24 in terms of GDP and No. 64 of GDP per capita. In the early 1990s the country used to be 10th worldwide and 1st in Latin America according to health care service quality. Currently, although it is 1st for health expenditure, it is 6th in results.

Over the next decade, surprising innovations in drugs and medical technologies are expected. This situation will force a strong transfer of economic resources towards innovative companies in detriment of hospitalization centers. This will compel hospitals toward profound modernization and re-engineering, in spite of the undercapitalization they suffer.

The healthcare system in Argentina is segmented into 24 health programs (one for each province) and in almost 300 programs (each depending on a different social security coverage) that are, at the same time, fragmented (each of the financial organizations manages its own economic funds). Twenty-five years ago, the Argentine government decided that health insurance coverage would depend on work. The consequence of that decision was great inequity:

- Solution 1
  - The absence of integrated networks among the public and private sector, Public Private Partnership (PPP).

- Solution 2
  - To structure a public – private integrated network, where every user defines where to receive medical care.
  - To offer a leading primary health care system, an ambulatory and decentralized coverage. Decentralization should be both vertical (different levels of complexity) and horizontal (different centers and specializations). This would result in significant savings of resources and energy. The network would be able to respond to the definition of hospital as a center mainly for surgical and complex invasive studies, hospitalizations with intensive care units.

- Solution 3
  - There is a significant delay in the application of the most advanced concepts of quality and clinical and administrative management, especially in the public sector. Digitalization of medical files with a single standard is halfway and should be accelerated to face the essential transformations that are required.

SUMMARY
To work out these ambitious objectives, a political decision is essential. It is necessary to implement an independent audit and effective monitoring and management control. Training programs in health system management are essential and should be a priority.

About the Argentine Chamber of Health Companies (CAES)
The Argentine Chamber of Health Companies (CAES) is a non-profit organization created with the aim of representing institutions and professionals that participate in the life of the health care entrepreneur sector. It was founded on August 31st, 1994 by a group of national leaders to integrate all participants of the healthcare sector: scientific, commercial, educational and communication companies of all regions of Argentina. With this philosophy, the new entity soon received the adhesion of recognized personalities as well as institutions, universities, laboratories, suppliers and media of Argentina.