The local health authority (Authority), of Valle d’Aosta, in the mountainous northwest corner of Italy, provides medical services to approximately 118,000 residents in 74 towns. Organized into four districts, it manages two hospitals (Viale Ginevra and Beauregard, with 436 beds and 40 outpatient positions) and a clinic (15 beds, eight outpatient positions) in Aosta, the regional capital. In addition, multispecialty ambulatory care facilities are distributed among the region’s districts. Overall, in one year the Authority handles approximately 50,000 emergency room episodes and 22,000 hospital admissions. Ambulatory services amount to approximately 220,000 visits per year.

Access to Information with InterSystems TrakCare®

The Valle d’Aosta region is marked by deep valleys that hug some of Europe’s highest mountains, including Mont Blanc and Cervino. Such terrain (one town, for example, can only be reached by cable car) presents unique challenges to the healthcare system.

- Travel between doctor’s offices, clinics, and hospitals can be difficult and time consuming, and introduces scheduling and lost productivity due to no-shows.
- In some portions of the Italian healthcare system the roles of general practitioners and pediatricians have become less clinical and more administrative. But in the mountain communities of Aosta, it is just these practitioners who are closest and most available to the population. They are in the best position to manage patient care – if they have access to all relevant healthcare information.

To address these challenges, the Authority chose to upgrade its older systems to the Web-based InterSystems TrakCare healthcare information system. Aosta saw how TrakCare’s comprehensive, modular, fully integrated design could help improve patient care and service,
while reducing its costs. At the same time, TrakCare's embedded rapid integration platform, InterSystems Ensemble®, enables rapid interfacing with existing systems and avoids the cost and disruption of the “rip and replace” transitions required by competing products.

Centralized Data, Distributed Access
The Authority began with the TrakCare Foundation modules – Clinicals and Patient Administration, and then added Laboratory, Operating Theater Management, and Billing capabilities. All TrakCare modules, and now the legacy systems they’re integrated with, share the single Electronic Patient Record (EPR), master patient index, and single InterSystems Caché® database at the heart of the TrakCare system. With this unified architecture and Web-based interface, accurate clinical and administrative information is available at any location, regardless of where it was generated. The result has been more efficient registration, scheduling, care delivery, and discharge processes. Test results are stored in the patient’s EPR, and are immediately available to physicians throughout the region, as is clinical history, medications and allergies, and the other vital information needed to make the best medical decisions.

With access to TrakCare scheduling capabilities available from any point in the system, citizens now have the information needed to make informed decisions about travel time, appointment location, and wait times, as well as the ability to easily cancel or reschedule appointments. Because of TrakCare, the Authority experiences fewer missed appointments, and can balance wait lists among the different providers of a service.

More Power to the General Practitioner
For the Authority, a primary benefit of TrakCare and its Electronic Patient Record is the information it provides to local general practitioners and pediatricians. Information from the patient’s visits to other Authority facilities and physicians, plus test results and reports, is integrated with the local physician’s own electronic medical record technology. This provides a complete and up-to-date picture of their patients’ health status, enabling these physicians to take a leading role in their patients’ care.

Powerful Technology, Superior Healthcare
The power and flexibility of TrakCare have enabled the local health authority to satisfy the needs of three audiences – the central hospital complex and clinicians in Aosta, the local physicians throughout the region, and the citizens in need of care. Future use of the TrakCare system calls for deeper integration with community physicians by enabling electronic transmission of orders for outpatient procedures and hospital admissions. These capabilities will help the Authority avoid costs related to registering these orders, further reduce errors caused by double entries, implement accurate, real-time healthcare cost monitoring systems, and respond faster to sudden peaks in demand.