



**ITALIAN HEALTH ECONOMICS
ASSOCIATION**

31st ANNUAL CONFERENCE

*Addressing the Challenges of Unmet Health Needs:
Strategies, Models and Tools for the Future of Healthcare Systems*

Milan, December 10–11, 2026

CALL FOR ABSTRACT

Protecting health and responding to the needs of patients and citizens are foundational principles of the Italian National Health Service (SSN). Despite advances in medicine and technology, significant challenges remain in ensuring adequate levels of effectiveness and equity. Unmet healthcare needs have become a key indicator of healthcare system performance, as they reflect socio-economic, organizational, and territorial barriers to access, as well as the structural role of the social determinants of health in shaping the unequal distribution of needs and outcomes. In Italy, these dynamics occur within a context characterized by population ageing, growing demand for care, persistent regional disparities, and chronic underfunding of public healthcare, raising concerns about the long-term sustainability of the SSN. Healthcare costs, waiting times, and variability in service provision continue to drive unmet needs, leading patients to forgo care or turn to private healthcare. The analysis of these phenomena highlights how socio-economic and territorial inequalities translate into unequal access to care, with implications for health outcomes. At the same time, the study of unmet needs can inform policies and organizational models aimed at strengthening healthcare system responsiveness. These include technological innovation, organizational networks, access-enhancing interventions, governance mechanisms, public-private partnerships, and social innovation initiatives, including the involvement of the non-profit sector.

This call for papers invites theoretical and empirical contributions addressing unmet health needs from an economic and managerial perspective, positioning them as a key lens for understanding health inequalities and as an evidence base for guiding public policies and organizational decision-making. Particular attention will be devoted to the role of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) in strengthening primary and community care, healthcare infrastructure, and human capital, and in reducing territorial disparities.

Contributions based on quantitative and qualitative evidence, policy evaluations, and comparative analyses are encouraged, with the aim of deepening the understanding of the determinants of unmet health needs and identifying policy options consistent with

the principles of equity and universalism underpinning the Italian healthcare system, also in light of the central role of the social determinants of health.

Suggested topics (non-exhaustive list):

- Measurement and determinants of unmet health needs
- Social determinants of health and socio-economic and territorial inequalities
- Healthcare costs, waiting times, and service organization
- Private healthcare expenditure and utilization
- Prevention and access to specialized care
- Population ageing and healthcare demand
- Healthcare governance and territorial equity in service provision
- Ex ante and ex post evaluations of PNRR interventions
- Strengthening primary and community care and management of vulnerable patients
- Human resources in healthcare: skills, shortages, and distribution
- Health outcomes, equity, and sustainability of the SSN
- Comparative evidence and international policy lessons
- Policy tools to reduce unmet health needs
- Technological and organizational innovations
- Public-private partnerships and social innovation
- Social, environmental, and economic sustainability
- Performance analysis of regional health systems and healthcare organizations

The AIES Annual Conference 2026 will provide a forum to explore these pressing issues. It aims to foster dialogue among experts from academia, healthcare practice, and policymaking to develop innovative, evidence-based solutions that can improve health policy, decision-making, and research in health economics and healthcare management.

We welcome theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions, including policy analyses. **Submissions addressing topics beyond the main conference theme are also welcome and will be considered for dedicated parallel sessions.**

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Eleonora FICHERA, Department of Economics, University of Bath.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Submissions may take one of the following forms:

- 1) **Individual abstracts** must be submitted via the following [EasyChair platform link](#).
- 2) **Organized Sessions / Panels** (up to 3–4 presentations on a specific theme, moderated by a session chair) must be submitted via email at the following address: aies.2026@unimi.it

Deadline: **July 15, 2026.**

Abstracts may be written in English or Italian and must follow the respective guidelines below:

1) Individual Abstracts

- Indicate if the research field is Economics or Management;
- Max 5,000 characters (including spaces);
- Author(s) name(s) and affiliation(s);
- Presenting author;
- Email and phone number of the corresponding author;
- Title, background, objectives, methodology, and main results;
- Indicate if the abstract is submitted for the AIES Young Researchers Award.

2) Organized Sessions / Panels

- Max 8,000 characters (including spaces)
- Session title;
- Name(s), email(s), phone number(s), and affiliation(s) of session coordinator(s);
- Name(s) and affiliation(s) of presenting author(s) (maximum of 4 presentations);
- Title, background, objectives, methodology, and main results for each presentation.

For any further information or to contact the organizing committee, please write to the following email address: aies.2026@unimi.it

AIES YOUNG RESEARCHERS AWARD

The AIES Young Researchers Award is an important initiative that aims to recognize and support the work of young scholars in the field of health economics and management. This award offers emerging researchers' valuable recognition, visibility, and the opportunity to connect with sector experts. By promoting the development and recognition of young researchers, AIES contributes to the ongoing growth and vitality of research in health economics and policy in Italy. To be considered for the AIES Young Researchers Award, authors must explicitly declare their candidacy and attest to their eligibility. All authors must be under 35 years of age to be eligible. Authors whose abstracts are accepted are required to submit a full (original and unpublished) paper by September 30, 2026. The Scientific Committee will evaluate submissions based on criteria such as originality, relevance, clarity of presentation, and potential impact on the field. The winner will be invited to present their work during the opening plenary session.

ABSTRACT REVIEW AND SELECTION

All submissions will be peer-reviewed by the Scientific Committee. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by **September 15, 2026**. Abstracts will be evaluated based on coherence, methodological soundness, and thematic relevance. Presentations will be assigned to sessions according to topic and approach.

REGISTRATION FEE

Participation fees for the Conference are as follows:

- For AIES members in good standing with their 2026 membership fee: €180.
- For others AIES members (not yet current with their membership): €230.
- For non-members: €280.

An additional contribution will be requested for the conference dinner.

Registration fees are non-refundable.

All information about the conference will be available on the AIES website:
<http://www.aiesweb.it>.

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