



PRESS KIT

Philadelphia, May 30, 2007

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One Scientist's Efforts to Spark an Italian Renaissance in Cancer Research

(Philadelphia, May 30, 2007) A new biomedical research institute is soon to open its doors in Terni, about 100 kilometers north of Rome. Behind the new institute is Antonio Giordano, MD., PhD., president and founder of Sbarro Health Research Organization (www.shro.org) who left his native Naples years ago to make a name for himself in genetics and cancer research at Temple University and Thomas Jefferson University, both in Philadelphia. Since those early days, Giordano has set himself apart with his efforts securing private funds for his work and supporting young scientists. Giordano is profiled by Science Careers contributing editor Elisabeth Pain in the May 25 issue of Science.

In the early 1990s, Giordano convinced the owner of the Italian fast-food chain Sbarro to donate \$1 million to establish his own cancer and molecular medicine research institute in Philadelphia. Since then, Giordano has raised \$3 million in private funding and \$27 million in scientific grants, which have supported more than 250 graduate students and postdocs in both Italy and the U.S. Now, he's secured more than 60 million euros (about \$80 million) in donations from Italian financial institutions for the Terni institute.

An interim facility for the Terni institute will open its doors this fall, housing 20 to 30 early-career scientists. The main facility will be up and running by 2009, where Giordano hopes to provide research space and funds for an additional 50 biomedical students and postdocs.

Giordano sees the new institute as an opportunity to give back to his home country. "I owe this to Italy," he says. "This is where I grew up and was trained."