

HCIM 2026 brings global experts on arts in healthcare to Lausanne

Lausanne, Switzerland – 16 March 2026. For three days, Lausanne hosted the Healthcare Clowning International Meeting (HCIM) 2026. The global congress dedicated to the role of art and play in healthcare takes place every three years in a different country. Organized by the Theodora Foundation on the campus of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne (EPFL), the event brought together 684 participants from 46 countries. Artists, healthcare professionals and researchers shared a common goal : shaping a more humane future for healthcare.

Across **139 presentations, workshops and posters**, participants explored new approaches to collaboration between art, medicine and science. These exchanges shaped three inspiring days of dialogue, learning and collaboration.

For the Theodora Foundation, organizing HCIM 2026 represents an important milestone. The congress strengthened international collaboration, supported the professionalization of artistic practices in healthcare and fostered dialogue between art, research and medical professionals.

«This edition was rich in exchange, reflection and energy. It created space to build connections across borders and disciplines and to redefine the role of art and play in healthcare.»

— Miriam Bass Costantini, HCIM 2026 Project Lead

Science meets Giggle Doctors

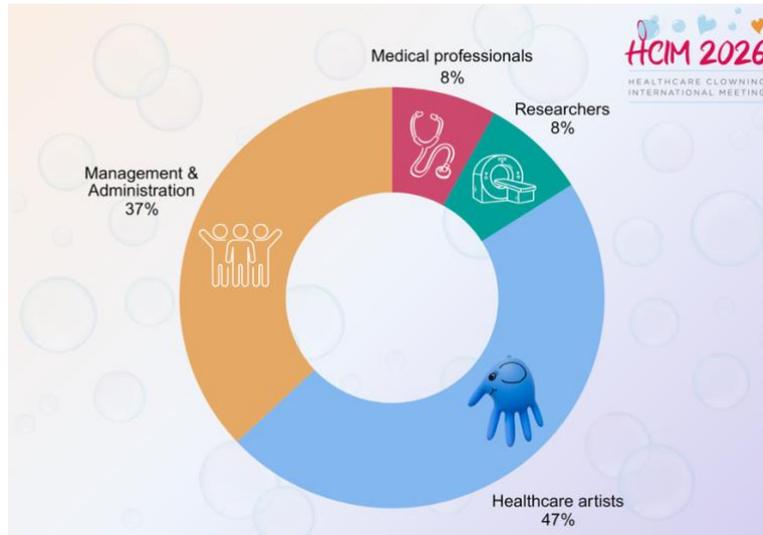
One of the highlights of the congress was the world premiere of the results of a scientific study conducted by neuroscientist Solange Denervaud at the Center for Biomedical Imaging (CIBM), in collaboration with the Giggle Doctors of the Theodora Foundation.

Using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), the study demonstrates measurable effects of their visits on the brain activity of hospitalized children. The findings show how artistic interactions can positively influence emotional and cognitive processes, opening new perspectives for understanding the role of art in the care pathway.

These results represent an important step toward the scientific recognition of performing arts in healthcare.

A stimulating interdisciplinary dialogue

The diversity of professional backgrounds enriched the exchanges. Among participants were **8% healthcare professionals, 8% researchers, 37% management and administrative professionals, and 47% healthcare artists.** These varied perspectives encouraged a vibrant interdisciplinary dialogue and opened new pathways for collaboration.



An international impulse for healthcare

Bringing together professionals from different disciplines and cultures highlighted the growing importance of art in supporting patients and contributing to the development of healthcare systems.

The dialogue initiated in Lausanne will continue to inspire innovative projects worldwide and strengthen the role of healthcare artists throughout the care journey.

«For us, this conference marks the culmination of nearly forty years of work dedicated to developing and professionalizing organizations of performing artists working in healthcare in many countries. It is a great joy to see so many participants from around the world gathered in Lausanne to shape together the future of a more humane healthcare system.»

— Jan and André Poulie, founders of the Theodora Foundation

Key figures of HCIM 2026

- **684 participants** from around the world
- **46 countries represented**
- **142 organizations** active in performing arts in healthcare
- **139 presentations, conferences, workshops and posters**
- **114 dedicated volunteers and staff members**

About HCIM

The Healthcare Clowning International Meeting is a global event exploring the impact of clowning and artistic practices on health. It fosters dialogue between artists, researchers and healthcare professionals to further develop care practices worldwide. The congress counts the Center for Biomedical Imaging (CIBM) among its partners and is supported by EPFL, the City of Lausanne, Moose Toys and the European Federation of Healthcare Clown Organizations (efhco).

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Multimedia content

<https://www.swisstransfer.com/d/bcaa5636-85c4-4d65-b10a-3581c63967d1>

More information

www.hcim2026.org

