

HEALTH

- On 20 September 2001, **Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo** was sworn-in as the **first Health Minister of East Timor** and **João Martins** as the **Vice-Minister**. De Araújo was among the first 17 East Timorese Senior Civil Servants of the Division of Health Services of the then-called East Timor Transitional Administration (ETTA) to be sworn-in by SRSJ Sergio Vieira de Mello in June 2001.
- An additional **64 senior-level East Timorese** have been recruited to senior management and clinical positions in the health services, including as **Heads of District Health Services (DHS)** in each of the districts. As of December 2001, East Timor's Health Division had more than 700 Timorese staff out of 1,457 posts. Recruitment is ongoing.
- Since the formation of the Second Transitional Government, the Ministry of Health has largely taken over the implementation of district-level health care. These plans include services to be provided through a **network of 64 community health centres, 88 health posts and 117 mobile clinics**. In March 2002, the ministry reached **the second phase of its rehabilitation and development program**, which focuses on strengthening the health care referral system, meeting the needs of inpatients and improving surgical facilities – particularly for mothers and their children.
- Recruitment of doctors is ongoing. **Plans call for 21 doctors to be distributed throughout the districts**. Thirteen of them are already working, and eight more were scheduled to be recruited by the end of March 2002. Working groups involving both ministry staff and other stakeholders are active in health policy, health promotion, vector-borne disease control, reproductive health and STD/HIV/AIDS.
- The construction of the first **Community Health Center (CHS)** at Comoro, Dili, is scheduled to be opened in May. Construction of 21 more will start soon. East Timor's **Central Medical Store**, a US\$1.3 million medicines warehouse that is the distribution hub of the national health system, opened in February 2002.
- The **International Committee of the Red Cross** handed over the management of the **Dili National Hospital** to the government in June 2001. When ICRC undertook the management of the hospital in September 1999 much of the equipment and medical supplies were missing or damaged. Since then the hospital has been rehabilitated and now operates at near full capacity.
- The Health Ministry and UNTAET jointly launched in early April 2002 a **National HIV/AIDS Awareness Campaign**. East Timor has a relatively low estimated HIV infection rate of 0.64 percent, but several social factors make it vulnerable to an epidemic: massive social dislocation; cross-border migration; high unemployment; illiteracy; and low awareness about HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. The campaign employs UNTAET's television, radio and publications units to promote general awareness on how to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. It also promotes ongoing HIV/AIDS-related initiatives by the government, such as the ongoing **national HIV/AIDS situation assessment**.

