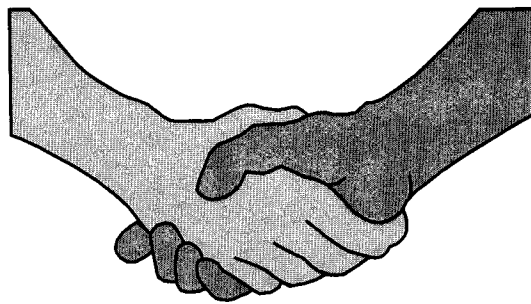


Ministry of Health Annual Report

“Ajmuur Ej Adwōj Jimor Eddo”
(Health is a Shared Responsibility)



Fiscal Year 2002

Message from the Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health has undergone a number of changes in the past year. One of these changes includes the ministry's official name change, as approved by the Cabinet, from Ministry of Health and Environment (MOHE) to Ministry of Health (MOH). The changes the MOH has undergone have been both positive and not so positive in that both have presented us with the same challenges: either sustaining improvements in the long term or improving on the status quo.

During the year, legislation was passed to allow the transfer of both the Health Care Revenue Fund and the Health Fund from the Marshall Islands Social Security Administration to the MOH. The administration and management of these funds is significant since it allows the MOH to fully utilize the funds for medical and other pharmaceutical supplies and services.

The referral program has also been evaluated by the Ministry of Health with technical assistance from Trinity Health International. To date, the Health Fund Board has been in operation to assist in the management of the program.

Capital improvements in the MOH during the year includes the opening of the newly constructed Leroy Kitlang Memorial Hospital in Ebeye that was dedicated in February 2002. With the hospital now fully operational, all MOH curative and preventive programs and services in Ebeye will be in one location.

There are also plans for the Majuro Hospital. A formal agreement with the Japanese government took place in November 2002 when a Memorandum of Agreement was signed by the Minister of Health and Japanese government representatives. The planned Majuro Hospital Annex is to house the Majuro Hospital clinical services, the Primary Health Care Administration, Public Health and outpatient clinics including various PHC programs and services and will be the first step in enhancing outpatient and public health services.

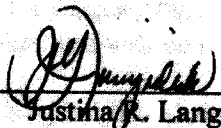
The hospital has also expanded its tertiary care services with the hiring of medical staff with specialties in urology, orthopedic surgery, pathology, radiology, otolaryngology, anesthesiology, and ophthalmology. In addition, the MOH has also begun to implement a nurse aide training program to supplement nursing services in the MOH. The Ministry recognizes that the shortage of trained Marshallese in the health professions and dependence on foreign-trained staff as a concern. It is expected that the practical nursing program will contribute to the enhancement of the health care services provided by the MOH by increasing the number of trained Marshallese staff as well as providing the educational and employment opportunities in nursing and other health professions to add to the two local doctors who recently completed their training at the Fiji School of Medicine. Improvements have also been seen in the diagnostic laboratories with the hiring of new staff, training of current staff and the procurement of diagnostic laboratory equipment.

Mammography services at the hospital was initiated during the year. This service is a welcome and needed service for women. The mammography services will contribute to the early detection of breast cancer.

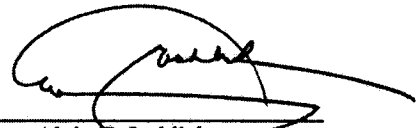
Primary Health Care services continue to be part of the Ministry's effort to expand community services. Health team visits to the outer islands have increased, community and zonal nursing programs have been enhanced, and public health clinics continue to see heavy patient loads. The PHC bureau has also completed a national measles campaign that covered all the outer islands.

Despite our accomplishments, major challenges remain. Increasing rates of diabetes and diabetes-related cases are being documented. Deaths from diabetes related causes are also rising. It is suspected that the importance of diabetes has been down played if it was not mentioned on the death certificates. Data compiled shows that diabetes and diabetes-related deaths is the number one cause of death from 1996 to 2001. In addition, the age group for those found at highest risk for diabetes is getting younger. There is also an increasing number of suicides among the population. Completed suicides has risen in recent years and is mainly males in their mid 20s to early 30s. This is a concern since a significant portion of the population is in this age group. Communicable diseases are also on the rise. Sexually transmitted diseases continue to increase. Several factors have been attributed to this increase. One of the setbacks has been that only those people who come for testing are known and that those who are often at highest risk do not come to be tested.

The community we serve has often exclusively looked to the MOH and the government in matters of health. One of the cornerstones of the health care services we provide is community participation. In order to decrease the prevalence of the many life-styles related diseases we see today, it is important that the community is educated and motivated to change those behaviors that enhance these health risks. International experience has shown that the most effective health interventions are those pursued by individuals and families for prevention of health problems before they arise. "Health is (and will continue to be) a Shared Responsibility."



Justina R. Langidrik
Secretary of Health



Hon. Alvin F. Jacklick
Minister of Health

Table of Content

Message from the Ministry of Health	3
Map of the Republic of the Marshall Islands	6
Executive Summary	7
Bureau of Primary Health Care	9
Dental Services	9
Health Promotion and Human Services	10
Outer Islands Health Care	10
Division of Public Health	13
Reproductive Health Services	13
Immunization Program	15
STD/HIV Program	17
Chronic Disease Control Program	19
Tuberculosis and Leprosy Program	19
Bureau of Majuro Hospital	23
Outpatient Services	24
Inpatient Services	26
Medical Services	28
Clinical Laboratory Services	31
Radiology Services	33
Pharmacy Services	33
Medical Supply	34
Rehabilitation Services	35
Biomedical Department	35
Food Services	36
Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers & Australian Volunteers International	36
Conclusion	37
Bureau of Administration Personnel and Finance	39
Bureau of Kwajalein Atoll Health Care	45
Division of Primary Health Care	45
Dental Health	46
Immunization Program	46
Human Services	46
Maternal and Child Health	47
Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS Program	48
TB/Leprosy Program	48
Chronic Disease	48
Division of Ebeye Hospital Services	49
Bureau of Health Planning and Statistics	51
Registration of Births	51
Registration of Death	54

Map of the Republic of the Marshall Islands

