



Medical Aid East Timor

June 1, 2001

MAET Advisory board members :

Dr. Dan Murphy, MD, PhD
Bairro Pite Clinic, Dili, East Timor

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Lynne Cleeland, MS
Instructional Program Manager
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Dear friend of the medical profession,

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to an extraordinary doctor, a credit to the medical profession and doctors everywhere. Dr Murphy operates the Bairro Pite Clinic, in the capital Dili, one of three facilities in East Timor which is capable of treating and providing inpatient services for the worst cases of tuberculosis and malaria. The clinic can also provide maternity care and infant pediatric care.

Dan and the clinic see upwards of 600 people daily and everyone is treated based on need and the availability of drugs, and that includes those who cannot pay for treatment.

Dr Murphy has lived and worked in East Timor for the most part of the last three years while providing a level of healthcare previously unknown on the island. Dr Murphy speaks Portuguese and local Tetum dialects and has knowledge of the local traditions and culture. Dr. Dan, as he is known by the East Timorese, has extensive experience as a practitioner in the developing world, where he has worked in Mozambique (three years), Laos and East Timor. Dan left his practice in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and ended up in East Timor in the fall of 1998. Dan also worked six years for Caesar Chavez and the United Farmworkers in Southern California battling the health consequences of pesticide abuse.

The East Timorese have endured over twenty five years, of arguably, one of the most brutal invasions and occupations by an army in world history. Renegade elements of the Indonesian army, with its surrogate militia, are now credited with a documented scorched earth campaign instituted after the people of East Timor voted overwhelmingly 79.5% for independence, in a United Nations sponsored referendum, over continued occupation. The United Nations as an organization opposed the occupation for almost a quarter century.

East Timor has always had an inadequate healthcare system, underfunded and overtaxed with diseases in epidemic proportions, like TB and malaria. Other diseases include leprosy, dengue fever, encephalitis, infant diarrhea, ringworm, water parasites. Schizophrenia -often due to psychological terror and extreme brutality during the occupation period, is also present.

Extreme medical problems only tend to make life more difficult in a country rebuilding nine out of ten buildings and replacing virtually everything as a result of the Indonesian military's massively destructive retreat in September of 1999.

While the Timorese may presently need considerable help from the nations of the world, it would be unfair to characterize East Timor as another poor country from the dependent third world, as in fact the East Timorese have considerable untapped resources like large oil and gas reserves, organic coffee and untouched fishery potential which could easily make them an example for the world and a future healer of world ills.

Dr Murphy has visited Madison every year of the last three and received valuable moral and financial support from medical, political and sociocultural groups based in Madison, Wisconsin including the UW International Health Exchange and the UW Office of International Health.

In support of the most recent Madison sister city project with Ainaro, East Timor, voted on unanimously by the Madison City Council in February of this year, Dr Murphy and the staff of the Bairo Pite clinic have made links between the clinic in the East Timorese Capital Dili and the small impoverished mountainous town of Ainaro. The Ainaro hospital, as with most hospitals and clinics, was attacked and burned in 1999 and the roof is severely damaged or non-existent. The Ainaro hospital facility barely operates and repairs aren't slated until sometime in 2003.

As medicine in the first world is increasingly influenced by the international nature of things, diseases and health conditions in the third world are now important to everyone. Please take this opportunity to develop a relationship with a clinic, a staff and a western doctor working on the frontline of the developing world's health crisis.

We hope that you can join us with Dr Murphy of the Bairo Pite clinic for any or all of his three speaking events on June 12th and 13th :

"The Challenge of Medicine in East Timor", Tuesday, June 12th, noon, Clinical Sciences Center (UW Hospital) Room G5/113 (600 Highland Ave.)

"Healing East Timor with Medicine and Laughter", Tuesday, June 12th, 7:30pm at the Pres House, 731 State Street (on library mall), with Dr Murphy and former Madisonian Yohan who is working with a theater and music group Bibi Bulak in East Timor (includes slide or video show), and on

Wednesday, June 13th, 5:30pm for dinner fundraiser/talk by Dr. Murphy, a benefit for the Bairo Pite Clinic, at Chautara Restaurant, 334 State Street, 5:30-7:30pm. Buffet Dinner 5:30pm, cost: \$8.50 suggested. Donations graciously accepted for the Clinic. Dr. Murphy talks 6:15-7pm : ***"A Doctor's Eye View of East Timor's Medical Health Development"***

Finally, Dr Murphy would very much like to meet with persons who might be able to assist with scholarships for Timorese medical students.

-Thanks- Medical Aid East Timor,

<http://www.aideasttimor.org>