

# Mala to head health, social services

by **Alexandra J. McClanahan**  
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Gov.-elect Walter J. Hickel announced six appointments over the last week, including naming an Alaska Native — Dr. Ted Mala — to his cabinet.

Mala, the University of Alaska professor who pioneered the international Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies and helped open the U.S.-Soviet border through medical exchanges, has been asked to serve as commissioner of the Department of

Health and Social Services.

Other appointments announced in a series of three press conferences include:

- John Sandor, a professional forester and public administrator from Juneau, named commissioner of the

Department of Environmental Conservation. Sandor was the regional forester for the U.S. Forest Service in Alaska from 1976 to 1984. He is currently executive director of the Alliance for Juneau's Future.

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•Lloyd Hames, a business executive from Sitka, named commissioner of the Department of Corrections. Hames currently owns and manages retail stores in both Sitka and Ketchikan.

•Millett Keller, a data processing specialist, named commissioner of the Department of Administration.

•Shelby Stastny, an accountant, named director of the Office of Management and Budget.

•Vivian Hamilton, former news writer and currently corporate communications manager and spokeswoman for the Alaska Railroad Corp., named press secretary.

Mala is the director and founder of the Circumpolar Institute at the University of Alaska Anchorage. An Inupiat, Mala is the son of Alaska's first Native movie star Ray Mala (in the 1930s) and a Russian immigrant, Galina Liss Mala. The Alaskan side of the family is from Buckland in Northwest Alaska.

Hickel said he believes Mala's years of efforts to encourage Arctic nations — particularly the United States and the Soviet Union — to cooperate on health issues will serve him well in his new job.

He also said Mala will bring the "human element" to the department.

Asked at a press conference whether he would encourage new research in health issues, Mala said, "We've researched ourselves to death."

Mala said he believes much research

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has been done and that the answers to many problems are "sitting on a lot of shelves" in published studies. He will work toward eliminating duplication of services and encouraging cooperation between state and federal agencies, as well as Alaska Native corporations, he said.

Although he declined to answer specific questions about abortion, Mala said Hickel would not have selected him had he not shared Hickel's anti-abortion views.

As for his successor at the Circumpolar Institute, Mala said he expected that an acting director would be appointed shortly.

Mala, a 1980 graduate of the Harvard School of Public Health, received a medical degree from the Autonomous University in Guadalajara, Mexico, and a bachelor of arts in philosophy from DePaul University in Chicago.

Mala began his public health career in the late 1970s as a special assistant for health affairs for the Alaska Federation of Natives.