

## Asistencia Sanitaria Interprovincial SA, ASISA

One of the great challenges faced by Espriuan health co-operatives was their extension throughout Spain, as they had to adapt themselves to provinces with far ranging differences in healthcare situations. However, the constitution of ASISA in 1971, its establishment in 33 provinces and subsequent link-up with Lavinia, the doctors' co-operative, has borne fruit: more than 20,000 doctors and over one and a half million users are now members of the co-operative.

**A**t the assembly of the Spanish Agrupación de Igualatorios Médicos Colegiales y Paracolegiales held in Tarragona in 1971, it became apparent that the need existed for a State-wide healthcare network. There were no provincial mutual benefit associations in any part of Spain, so Doctor Espriu was entrusted with the responsibility of developing this national health service.

This was how ASISA was born, as an inter-provincial mutual benefit association which facilitated the rapid appointment of doctors to the mutual benefit



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movement in all those provinces where previously there had been none. The unflinching work of Doctor Espriu and the moral and economic support of the Barcelona association brought about the establishment of ASISA centres in the provinces that had no mutual benefit associations or their like. In the space of two years, ASISA centres were created in 33 provinces, including Ceuta and Melilla. The healthcare network was thus constituted in 1973 by 19 provincial and one inter-provincial (ASISA) mutual associations.

In 1975 a transcendental opportunity arose to



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demonstrate the validity of this healthcare model, in the possibility of collaborating in the provision of publicly funded healthcare. In 1976 ASISA signed its first agreement with Muface, the Spanish state public servants' mutual benefit association.

ASISA is currently the leading entity by volume of turnover, number of people insured and quantity of professionals in the private healthcare insurance sector. It has maintained this leadership for almost 25 years, with a current market share of 22.37%, more than one and a half million insured clients and premium income in the year 2000 that exceeded 83,000 million pesetas.

ASISA now has a powerful infrastructure throughout all of Spain, developing insurance and healthcare activities through its 48 provincial centres, 38 local sub-centres and in collaboration with 5 provincial mutual benefit associations.

Generated by the reinvestment of part of the operating surpluses arising out of the co-operative nature of its ownership, ASISA offers the widest private hospital network in Spain. It owns 16 clinics, equipped with the latest in healthcare technology, with almost 1,500 rooms, allowing stays in individual rooms with a

family member present in all processes that require admission into hospital. Furthermore, the clinics, polyclinics, health centres working under joint agreements and collaborators, making a total of 503 centres, with more than 20,000 hospital beds throughout Spain, are a more than sufficient guarantee of an adequate response.

ASISA has the widest and most complete range of professionals in the sector, made up of more than 30,000 members including doctors, nurses, midwives, pharmaceutical analysts and so on.

In addition to the mother-company ASISA and its 16 clinics, another 16 wholly owned or participated companies dedicated, for the most part, to the provision of healthcare services also form part of the ASISA Group.

#### Lavinia

Lavinia Societat Cooperativa, comprising more than 20,000 Spanish doctors, is also a consequence of the creative energies of Doctor Espriu. Founded in June 1976, its aim was to ensure that all doctors in Spain could have access to the co-operative in equal conditions

and could participate in its Governing Body, maintain its line faithful to the principles of medical equality and take part in the management of ASISA, providing healthcare services to its members. Under the baton of its founder, Doctor Espriu, it became owner of all ASISA shares, acquiring them free of charge in January 1977 from the Barcelona Igualatario.

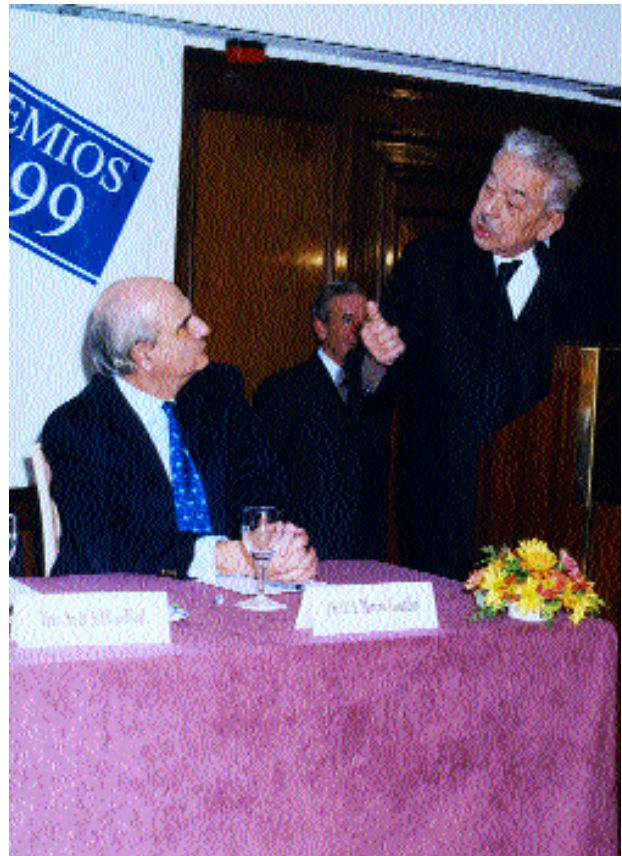
The capital invested in Lavinia is entirely Spanish and its area of operation Spain, governing and managing the activities developed by the ASISA Group. Representatives of doctor-members directly intervene in the management of healthcare activities, through Lavinia's different organs of government and participation.

The name Lavinia comes from one of the poetic works of Salvador Espriu, in allusion to its founder (the poet's brother) and the leading role the Barcelona Igualatorio played in the genesis of the health co-operative movement in Spain.

Lavinia's Statutes define the company as, "a co-operative entity providing services on a national level, of limited liability, and of which people who legally practise the medical profession may become members."

The general assembly annually appoints the main rectors of the co-operative and its group of companies and, thus, establishes the policies that ASISA must follow, approves the statutes and rules and elects the members of the Governing Body.

The current President of the Lavinia Governing Body is Doctor Francisco Carreño Castilla, and its President of Honour is Doctor Josep Espriu Castelló. **F**



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Doctor Josep Espriu received in 1999 the award that Edimsa (Medical Publications) rewards to important personalities in Spanish healthcare, for his contribution as founder and promoter of health co-operatives in Spain.



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The Lavinia doctors' co-operative General Assembly in Segovia (1999).