More Australian Government action needed on Ebola

Over a million infected by January without proper intervention predicts Atlanta CDC

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) and the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) are calling on the Australian Government to step up its response to the growing international Ebola crisis.

“Australia is lagging behind the US and UK after further commitments from these countries to provide funding and resources to stem the outbreak. The Australian Government’s response has been the provision of an initial $1 million to the World Health Organisation in the early stages of the outbreak, followed by an additional $7 million last week. While this investment is welcomed, it is a drop in the bucket compared to the $750 million from the US (as well as military personnel) and £100 million from the UK. Funding needs to include provision for treatment centres, direct medical support, personal protective equipment, training for volunteers and non-profit health workers and health personnel, a logistics hub and emergency supplies,” said Michael Moore, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the PHAA.

“It is time for Australia to step up. We need to provide appropriate troops and equipment, deploy our Australian Medical Assistance Team, assemble and support appropriately qualified health and other civilians who are ready and waiting to help, and make a significant financial contribution. Real action is needed to bring this outbreak under control,” said Mr Moore.

Alison Verhoeven, CEO of AHHA said: “New estimates released from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predict that if current trends continue, without a scale-up of effective interventions approximately 8000 people in Sierra Leone and Liberia will be infected with the virus by 30 September - with a further 21,000 cases estimated when correcting for potential underreporting.

“The latest modelling on the Ebola outbreak from the CDC must be a wake-up call to wealthy countries like Australia. While the Australian Government has committed some support, we have not done nearly enough to address this major humanitarian crisis. We do not want to see over a million people infected by January. AHHA and PHAA are urging the Government to show true international leadership and respond with the generosity for which Australians are renowned,” said Ms Verhoeven.

Mr Moore and Ms Verhoeven will be available for comment at Parliament House in Canberra today.

Where: Senate Courtyard at Parliament House in Canberra
When: Friday 26 September 2014
Time: 11am

For further information/comment:
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