Ebola

PHAA calls for comprehensive Australian Government action

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) once again calls on the government to act quickly and comprehensively on the Ebola outbreak by assisting with international efforts. According to Michael Moore, CEO of the PHAA, “The response of the Australian government should incorporate an immediate action, a short term, intermediate and long-term strategy for dealing with the crisis in West Africa. It requires parallel rather than an “either – or” approach.

Immediate action:

“The world is still playing catch up with this Ebola outbreak in West Africa,” he added. “Had Australia and other nations responded appropriately even a few months ago, we might not be in the position we are today. There is another chance. But Australia should delay no longer in taking action in West Africa. The US and UK have responded strongly. Even Cuba has sent large numbers in support and even Ethiopia, on the far side of Africa from the crisis has committed 400 health professionals. The PHAA reiterates its call, supported by over 100 health professors two weeks ago for the government to:

- provide appropriate troops and equipment and other logistical support,
- deploy our Australian Medical Assistance Teams,
- assemble and support appropriately qualified health professionals and other skilled civilians who are ready and waiting to help
- make a significant financial contribution

Mr Moore added, “Australia should also immediately remove the unscientific and inappropriate restriction on people from West Africa entering our country. We need a sensible, scientific response rather than an inappropriate and emotional draconian measure that is an affront to countries already wrestling with a crisis”.

Short term:

“The PHAA recognises the great work done by governments across Australia regarding our preparedness as well as the $18 million already contributed by the Federal government. Australia must maintain that preparedness”, said Mr Moore.

Intermediate Strategy:

“In the meantime it is also appropriate that Australia now looks to further training of public health and logistic teams that can either be deployed in West Africa or be rapidly deployed to assist neighbour governments in our South East Asia and Pacific region should an outbreak occur,” added Mr Moore.

Long-term Strategy:

“This epidemic should provide warning bells regarding world and regional preparedness for the spread of infectious diseases – Ebola in the Asia Pacific region would be a catastrophe,” according to the PHAA, “and it is predicted that if the world does not band together to control the West African Epidemic that it will spread globally”. Mr Moore added, “It is time to ramp up our financial support for the World Health Organization to be able to do its work more effectively. It is appropriate that Australia provide support for an increased effort in the preventative, public health and primary health care sectors”. Importantly, the upcoming G20 meeting in Brisbane will provide an opportunity for world leaders to address the underlying cause of the spread of this infection – poverty and lack of health and medical infrastructure,” he concluded.

For further information/comment:

Michael Moore, CEO, Public Health Association of Australia

0417 249 731