

## JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON AUSTRALIA'S IMMIGRATION DETENTION NETWORK

\*Q191\*

**Question:** Can you respond to the Human Rights Commission's recommendation around the need for an independent body to be charged with the function of monitoring the provision of health and mental health services in immigration detention. Does the department have a specific view on that and have they responded to the Human Rights Commission recommendation?

**Answer:** The department responded to the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) on this recommendation in September 2011.

The full text of the Department's response to the AHRC follows:

*The Department monitors the delivery of physical and mental health services in immigration detention through:*

- *an expert advisory body The Detention Health Advisory Group (DeHAG);*
- *input from The Council for Immigration Services and Status Resolution (CISSR);*
- *external scrutiny and complaints processes;*
- *feedback from the Detention Health Services Provider International Health and Medical Services (IHMS); and*
- *health reviews conducted by independent consultants.*

### ***The Detention Health Advisory Group (DeHAG)***

*The DeHAG and its Mental Health Sub-Group (MHSG) provides DIAC with independent expert advice to design, develop, implement and monitor health and mental health care services and policies for people in immigration detention. The DeHAG consists of key health and mental health professional and consumer group organisations including:*

- *Australian Medical Association*
- *Royal Australian College of General Practitioners*
- *Mental Health Council of Australia*
- *Australian Psychological Society*
- *Forum of Australian Services for the Survivors of Torture and Trauma*
- *Victorian Health Promotion Foundation*
- *Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists*
- *Royal College of Nursing Australia*
- *Public Health Association of Australia*
- *Australian Dental Association.*

*The Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office has an observer status on the DeHAG.*

*The DeHAG represents the Department's commitment to working in an open and accountable manner with our key health stakeholders to improve the general and mental health of people under our care.*

*The DeHAG's work program includes site inspections of places of immigration detention, including the Northern IDC, Darwin Airport Lodge APOD, places of immigration detention on Christmas Island, Curtin IDC, Scherger IDC, Villawood IDC, Maribyrnong IDC, Melbourne ITA, Inverbrackie APOD and Adelaide ITA. Following*

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*these inspections, the DeHAG has provided expert advice on a range of health issues, including mental health, dental services, communicable disease prevention and child health issues. DeHAG has also provided advice on safety concerns, including Occupational Health and Safety issues for some of the sites visited. These are followed up with relevant areas of the Department.*

### **The Council for Immigration Services and Status Resolution (CISSR)**

*CISSR provides feedback to the Department about the influence of health service delivery on the wellbeing of people in immigration detention, including how it can impact status resolution.*

### **External Scrutiny and Complaints Processes**

*The Department also receives feedback on health service delivery to people in immigration detention from organisations such as the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Australian Red Cross.*

*The Commonwealth Ombudsman visits detention facilities and scrutinises service delivery, including health services. It provides feedback to the Department about possible issues with service delivery and the Department follows up on the issues identified as required.*

*The Red Cross, through its work with people in immigration detention, also provides valuable feedback to the Department about services delivery including health services.*

*Formal complaint mechanisms allow people in immigration detention, or their representatives, to raise their concerns directly to the Department. The Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Australian Human Rights Commission also receive and investigate complaints about health services provision in detention facilities. These organisations will, if applicable, advise the Department of instances where they consider the provision of health care services has been deficient. The Department considers this reporting and feedback carefully and follows up as appropriate, including with the Detention Health Services Provider IHMS.*

*IHMS is part of International SOS, which provides health services to a number of governments and companies. It has its own internal audit and assessment processes.*

### **Audits and Assessments**

*IHMS undertakes audits and assessments of its services in immigration detention facilities:*

- **During 2009:** Internal audits against the Royal Australian College of General Practitioner (RACGP) Standards were conducted by IHMS head office personnel at a number of facilities.
- **April 2011:** An internal audit at Christmas Island facilities against RACGP standards was conducted by IHMS head office personnel.
- **May-Jun 2011:** A detailed audit was undertaken of the management processes and governance of health services. The audit was commissioned by IHMS and conducted by International SOS (IHMS's parent company).
- **June 2011:** Each site conducted a self-assessment against the RACGP Standards.
- **Quarterly:** An internal audit of health records and medication records is conducted at each site.

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*The Department has also commissioned various reviews of health services delivery in detention facilities:*

### **Review of Health Service Delivery Model Christmas Island**

*The Department engaged Phillipa Milne and Associates to provide independent expert advice on the appropriate level of health care services to be provided to people in immigration detention on Christmas Island. The report was completed in June 2010.*

### **Review of Health Service Delivery Model Mainland Detention Facilities**

*The Department engaged Phillipa Milne and Associates to provide independent expert advice on the appropriate level of health care services to be provided to people in immigration detention facilities on the Australian mainland. The report was completed in October 2010.*

### **Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Accreditation Pilot**

*The Department commissioned Quality in Practice (QIP) to review the RACGP Standards for health services in Australian immigration detention centres, develop an accreditation process, and provide a Detention Health Standards Report detailing recommended changes to the Standards. QIP provided a final report to the Department in October 2010.*

### **Review of Christmas Island Detention Health Services Clinical Governance Processes**

*The Department contracted Communio to conduct a clinical governance review (the Review) of health services provided to people in immigration detention on Christmas Island. The Review was conducted on 28 April 2011 and 3 May 2011. This work included the development of an audit tool, to enable assessment of the clinical governance arrangements on Christmas Island. Communio presented the findings of the review to the Department on 19 May 2011.*