



Media Release

17th December 2013

More not less needs to be done

The Federal Government's move to dissolve the Immigration Health Advisory Group (IHAG) is indeed very disappointing and has taken all the advocacy and migrant groups by surprise.

"ECCWA believes in evidence based decisions and two recent publications indicate that more not less needs to be done," said Dr. Zarrin S Siddiqui.

"The research report by Deans et al. (2013) has investigated number of Emergency Department(ED) attendances and primary diagnosis during the year 2011 and observed 770 ED attendances by 518 individual detainees in Darwin. The most common primary diagnosis was related to psychiatric problems. Another publication from Procter, Leo and Newman (2013) has also highlighted the severity of mental issues that the detainees face. With offshore processing there are no two opinions that the health resources are already scarce in those places and cannot address the needs of detainees."

She further commented "We also are aware that there are a number of asylum seekers and refugees from countries like Afghanistan, Iran and Sri Lanka where extended family support is very important which they missed out and it adds further to their health issues. Like our sister organisation Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia (FECCA), ECCWA also requests the government to revisit the decision."