

Migration Amendment (Health Care for Asylum Seekers) Bill 2012

Additional points from independent group of health experts following Senate committee hearing December 3rd 2012

It is clearly not appropriate for the health service provider to carry out review and monitoring oversight of their own operations to ensure that they are compliant with their contractual obligations to the Department and that they are providing services to a level which adequately minimizes risk.

We would recommend removal of the section, which states that individual assessments by independent inspectors should occur, as we do not believe that this is practical or appropriate.

To clarify, IHAG is an advisory group to the Secretary of the DIAC however this group (if it functions as DeHAG has in the past) will not have review or monitoring capacity but instead provides recommendations on the basis of concerns raised through the results of review and monitoring. To be effective the IHAG needs to receive quality data and timely information in order to be able to provide recommendations, which allows for the early detection of issues. This should minimize the risk of significant physical and mental health issues including self harm and suicide.

There is a therefore a need for a review and monitoring group, which is independent from the DIAC but can provide results of review of monitoring to the DIAC and preferably also to the IHAG. This model will minimize doubling up of oversight and improve data provision, which will aid the IHAG and DIAC in improving the provision of health services in the detention environment and mitigate risk to clients, staff and to the DIAC.