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**AMA CALLS FOR URGENT ACTION TO ENSURE PROPER HEALTH CARE FOR AYLUM SEEKER CHILDREN ON NAURU**

The AMA Federal Council, meeting in Canberra, this morning unanimously passed three motions calling on the Government to act urgently to guarantee the health and wellbeing of asylum seeker children and their families on Nauru.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said that, amid reports of a children’s health crisis on Nauru, the children and their families being held indefinitely on Nauru must be given urgent access to appropriate health care in a public and transparent way.

Dr Bartone said that the medical staff employed by IHMS on Nauru are doing their best in trying conditions, but the Australian public needs to be informed and shown that these asylum seekers are receiving appropriate care and support.

“These people have fled dangerous places and are now in the care of the Australian Government,” Dr Bartone said.

“The AMA repeats its call for a delegation of independent Australian health professionals to be allowed to visit and examine the asylum seekers - adults and children - and report on their condition to the Australian Parliament and the Australian people.

“It is our responsibility to care for these people. It is all about human rights. It is the right thing to do,” Dr Bartone said.

The full text of the motions is as follows.

**The Health of Asylum Seekers and Refugees**

**Preamble:**

The World Medical Association (WMA) Statement on Medical Care for Refugees, including Asylum Seekers, Refused Asylum Seekers and Undocumented Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) states that:

- Physicians have a duty to provide appropriate medical care regardless of the civil or political status of the patient, and governments should not deny patients the right to receive such care, nor should they interfere with physicians’ obligation to administer treatment on the basis of clinical need alone.
- Physicians cannot be compelled to participate in any punitive or judicial action involving refugees, including asylum seekers, refused asylum seekers and undocumented migrants, or IDPs or to administer any non-medically justified diagnostic measure or treatment, such as sedatives to facilitate easy deportation from the country or relocation.
- Physicians must be allowed adequate time and sufficient resources to assess the physical and psychological condition of refugees who are seeking asylum.
- National Medical Associations and physicians should actively support and promote the right of all people to receive medical care on the basis of clinical need alone and speak out against legislation and practices that are in opposition to this fundamental right.

**AMA Federal Council Motion 1:**

*Given multiple reports of a looming children's health crisis on Nauru, Federal Council calls for urgent action to prevent further harm to the health and welfare of child refugees and asylum seekers on Nauru.*

*We ask that these children and their families be removed from harm and have access to healthcare of an appropriate standard.*

**AMA Federal Council Motion 2:**

*Federal Council further demands that the Federal Government facilitates access to Nauru for a delegation of Australian medical professionals, to be appointed in consultation with the AMA, to assess the health and welfare of child refugees and asylum seekers. This includes access to the children and their families and/or carers, as well as the Nauruan officials administering to the children.*

*An appropriate delegation would potentially include a psychiatrist, a public health expert, a paediatrician and an infectious diseases physician.*

*This delegation would then make public the findings of its inspections and interviews to assure the Australian public that the Australian Government has done all that is possible to protect the health and wellbeing of asylum seekers and refugees.*

**AMA Federal Council Motion 3:**

*Federal Council further expects that the Australian Government satisfactorily provides comprehensive answers to the following two questions, which relate to the looming children's health crisis among refugees and asylum seekers on Nauru, who were placed there by the Australian Government:*

- 1. What are the healthcare arrangements, both physical and mental, in place for child refugee and asylum seekers on Nauru?*
- 2. What are the transfer arrangements for the child refugee and asylum seekers on Nauru and their immediate family members or carers if they require transfer from Nauru to access healthcare treatments that are not available on Nauru?*

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18 August 2018

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