



HSA members to assist in VIHA response to migrant ship humanitarian emergency

August 12, 2010

Over the past few days, VIHA has been working with health care unions to provide information and address concerns in preparation for receiving refugees requiring emergency medical care.

Canadian officials confirmed today that 490 refugees are aboard a vessel approaching the BC coast.

The old emergency department at Victoria General Hospital has been temporarily reopened to provide screening, triage, assessment, and diagnostic care. VIHA has also re-opened 7 North to treat refugees requiring hospital admission.

HSA members ... such as those specializing in CT scanning, x-ray, ultrasound, laboratory technology and pharmacy ... will be providing their expertise on a scheduled and/or on-call basis.

Stringent infection control measures will be in place, as well as universal protective precautions (including fit-testing for N95 respirators).

Depending on the medical condition of the refugees, immunization may be required for health care workers. If you have a defined medical condition, compromised immune system, or other defined predisposition to communicable disease that can be certified by a physician, you have a right to refuse immunization.

The special medical unit is expected to be in operation for less than a week.

VIHA has circulated a joint bulletin from the health authority and the health care unions, available [here](#).

Members in the South Island should also have received VIHA's public statement on the emergency response, available [here](#).

Any members with direct concerns can contact Senior Labour Relations Officer Benson Ho at 604.862.9009 (cell).

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