

Submission No. 25

(Inq into better support for carers)

A.O.C 10/6/08

**From:** marie  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 4 June 2008 2:28 PM  
**To:** Committee, FCHY (REPS)  
**Subject:** carer's needs

How difficult it is to say what we as carers of people with mental illness need.

Each case is different as each day can be different.

I am caring for my vision impaired husband who is totally blind almost 4 years and who also has RTA (retrograde total amnesia) for nearly two years. I am also caring for my adult son who has bi polar disorder.

I feel the thing we need most would be relief from the financial stress. Perhaps it could be looked at that all medical visits to doctors, psychiatrists, counsellors etc be bulk billed. It is difficult enough to pay for the medications without all the extras that need to be paid to the medical professionals. And think of all the extra fuel we need to be ferrying them to and from their appointments. Maybe an allocation of x amount of dollars on a special card (similar to a health care card) which can be used at doctors, counsellors or psychiatrists, speech therapists, occupational therapists etc to pay the gap or to pay for those services which are not covered by medicare.

My other need is for respite. Time away from the hassles and frustrations of living with the disabled and mental illness.

It is just too hard to get away because there is just no money left over from day to day living expenses, especially medical expenses and prescriptions. Also because we spend so much time organizing and taking control of the lives of our loved ones (including mental, financial, medical, social, health and day to day keeping the household running) that we just don't have the energy to organise respite for ourselves. It would be just another thing we would "have to do".

Anything that can be done to help carers would be welcome.

Many thanks  
Marie.