

12th June 2008

Secretary

Inquiry into Better Support for Carers

Standing Committee on Family, Community Housing and Youth

Submission No. 150

(Inq into better support for carers)

A.O.C. 25/6/08

Dear Secretary,

I am writing to make a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth's Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.

I cared for my mother, who had dementia, in her home where I also lived so I was on duty 24/7 as they say. She passed away 2½ mths ago.

I arranged (her doctor more correctly) for her to go to day respite (approx 5 hrs each day) - two days a week. My mother had, from time to time, short blackouts lasting up to 5 mins at a time known as TIA. If she had one of these when away at care the facility would call for an ambulance and send her to hospital even though there was nothing anyone could do and no treatment to be given for the condition.

The care facility would phone me and notify me that she was at the hospital. I asked why she was not allowed to stay there as she had recovered, with no side effects, by the time the

ambulance arrived. I was told this was standard procedure.

I asked why no one accompanied her to the hospital and ^{was} told this was not their responsibility. The result was that my mother who had no recollection of what had happened was sent to the Emergency section of the hospital on her own. At Emergency she was expected to give medical staff details of her condition, past history, contact details etc of which she had no idea, ^{because of the dementia} when asked things she did not understand she always replied "no" thus she was left without food and drink, cold and wanting to go to the toilet until I arrived. I do not drive so I was not able to get to the hospital immediately and in one instance was receiving medical treatment for myself.

I feel that better support for carers could be achieved if they were able to 'rest' (literally, assured that the person they cared for would be looked after for the assigned time, ^{they were in care} and that they ^(the carers) would not be expected to be available at a moments notice should the "persons" supposedly providing care decide to terminate the contracted care. When following this up I found that the caregivers expected to be paid for the full time even though Mum was at the hospital and they were not caring for her.

yours sincerely Janice