

A.O.C. 27/6/08
Submission No. 237
(Inq into better support for carers)

Sent: Wednesday, 18 June 2008 10:48 AM
To: Committee, FCHY (REPS)
Subject: Better Support for Carers

Committee Secretary
Inquiry into better Support for Carers
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family
Community Housing & Youth
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Secretary

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

I am a carer of my mentally ill daughter age 36yrs & give support to her 16yr old son. I estimate the time given to caring to be 24hrs per week., Full time during a crisis. I am my daughters unpaid Case Manager, with help from her GP. What is the salary of a case manager in the public mental health service?

Contribution of carers is a lifetime commitment. My role is undervalued, unappreciated, & stigmatised. In the case of a carer of a person with mental illness it becomes a shameful secret.

Caring creates barriers in social interaction in the following ways.
I become too tired to socialise.
I am worried & lack concentration.
I am involved with the problems of caring
I have to cancel social engagements.
I suffer social anxiety & stress.

My lifestyle has to be adjusted to factor in the economics of caring. The cost of utilities & unpaid bills mount up, often escalating to over \$1000 before it is known to the carer. The mentally ill are taken advantage of by freeloaders & often help to run up these bills. There is no Brokerage Fund to help carers if the consumer is outside the public hospital service. GP & mental health nurses are not considered to be part of the public service.

Support for carers must include ongoing counselling & emotional support. The grief is raw with no closure, it is ongoing it effects & divides the whole family & social network.

Recovery, acceptance & better understanding come from good counselling at the first opportunity.

To be heard & advised on how to deal with the services & advocate on behalf of the person they care for.

All carers are old before their time & need to feel comfortable about the future.

Help is needed with planning Wills & Trusts.

Many parents are worried about how to provide & give consideration to other children.

Carers need to be assured that Wills & Trusts will be carried out without interference from an outside body, i.e. DHS or Administrators, providing the parent has taken into account what they consider to be reasonable provision for their adult child.

A recent introduction of being able to put up to \$500,000 into a trust, & not have it counted as an asset, is a farce.

Most carers do not even have \$500 to spare during their lifetime of caring.

Thank you for taking my views into consideration as part of the Committee's Inquiry. I will look forward to the recommendations.

Judith