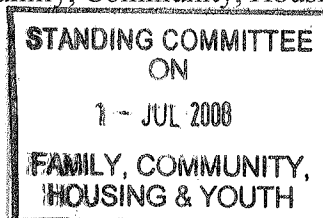


30/06/08

Submission No. 643
(Inq into better support for carers)

A.O.C. 8/7/08

Inquiry into Better Support for Carers
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth
PO Box 6021
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Secretary

Re: Submission

I wish to make a submission to the above named Standing Committee.
My role as a carer (age 66) of a mentally ill son (age 36) is affecting all aspect of my life:

1. financial hardship - I had to leave my job longer before retirement time
2. isolation - lack of social contacts, lack of support, stigma
3. loss of identity - inability to prioritise my personal needs/wellbeing
4. ill health - due to a prolonged level of stress over many years

Most of the times the needs of the carers are interwoven with those of the person cared for and seldom they can be addressed separately. For this reason I kindly suggest that this Committee looks into:

- a. Coordination of the existing services (government & non government) by better defining their mission statement/duties, in accordance to a specifically allocated role in the community. Carers of physically disabled people have different needs than those caring for the mentally ill. Eg. Request for respite improbable from the latter due to the nature of the illness
- b. Improve existing services with better trained staff and volunteers. Avoid costly duplication with useless associations asking for grants and offering nothing. Hospital based team of specialised doctors for a second opinion on diagnosis and medication. (Eg. My son had to suffer for 13 yrs before they got the medication right. During that time the damage became chronic/irreversible).
- c. Establish in each State and Territory a special clinic for the purpose of finding almost immediately after diagnosis the most suitable medication for each type of body bio-chemistry.
- d. Expect existing services to deliver the services they claim to deliver (only on paper at the moment). Ongoing support for sufferers and carers is needed.
- e. Establish a Crisis Intervention Unit with trained nurses instead of the Police.
- f. Stop discrimination against people with disability and their carers.

Anna-Maria