

Committee Secretary
Inquiry into Better Support for Carers
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family,
Community, Housing and 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 and Youth's Inquiry into Better Support for Carers.

I am submitting to the Inquiry because...

I have been caring for my husband since his diagnosis with a mental illness 38 years ago. I know that without my support, financially and other, he has been as well as possible and avoided becoming another homeless statistic, or worse. He has managed to hold a job for short periods. Medical support has been erratic.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

1. The role and contribution of carers in society

As a carer, I feel that my role is...

To keep the family together by supporting my husband to function as well as he could.

To support our children and help them deal with the reality of a family member with mental illness.

I am sure the positives have helped cancel out the negatives that they experienced for the most part

Both sons have become productive members of society, with good jobs.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

2. The barriers to social and economic participation for carers

As a carer, I face the following problems ...

In earlier years the stigma of mental illness created a barrier to social interaction.

Later in life I was required to retire earlier from my work as a nurse due to my husband needing increased care as he aged.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

3. The practical measures required to better support carers

As a carer, I need help with ...

Day to day tasks around the house

Continuing access to psychiatric services, as general practitioners are not usually equipped to understand mental illness.

Assistance to care for my own health, as I get older

Accurate assessment and monitoring of my husbands needs.

The outcome of a chronic mental illness is that friends, and even family, are not always understanding, and tend to keep their distance.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

4. Strategies to assist carers to access opportunities and choices

I think the Government can better help carers by ...

Continuing to educate the Medical profession on the role of carers, most especially in the area of mental health. Carers have been actively excluded in the past by some psychiatrists.

Recognizing the effects on the extended family of chronic illness of one member, but most especially when the condition is a mental illness.

More information is attached on a separate sheet

Thank you for taking my views into consideration as part of the Committee's Inquiry. I look forward to reviewing any recommendations you make to improve life for carers in Australia.

Yours sincerely

Print your name

Nancy

Date

3/7/08