

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family,
Community, Housing & Youth
PO Box 6021
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT. 2600

STANDING COMMITTEE
ON
23 JUN 2008
FAMILY, COMMUNITY,
HOUSING & YOUTH

11-6-08
Submission No. 309
(Inq into better support for carers)
A.O.C. 30/6/08

Dear Secretary,

In the interest of carers I wish to contribute some suggestions to ease the burden of carers.

I cared for my mother for six years. I was sixty eight when I commenced and seventy four when my mother died. In those years I had ten days in total away from the carer role, ie less than one and a half days per year. I became exhausted physically and eventually very depressed. Living in a unit in which I slept in the living room made life difficult. I do not possess a vehicle there is no public transport here. I walked a maximum of eight kilometres per day most of that walking to and from the town centre. For the last nineteen months I also had to walk to the nursing home and back. A taxi to and from the nursing home would cost \$13.00. Twice a month I took a taxi. I broke my ankle (a double compound fracture) then I had to take taxis daily to visit her. My mother had Alzheimer's syndrome and was ninety eight when she died. I will not elaborate on the problems I encountered however they were numerous. It is unbelievable that these years could change one's personality so drastically.

There was no one to sit with my mother when I went shopping etc. It caused me anxiety each time I went out.

I suggest that the government put in

place relieving agencies for carer relief.

I have been caring for my elder son who has bipolar disorder for fifty one years. This means I must take him anywhere I go e.g. visiting overnight etc. Recently I visited my daughter in Queensland. On the fourth day my son was ringing several times a day having panic attacks! This means he has to come with me. I have tried to leave him several times the results have always been disastrous he has attempted suicidal numerous times the last time ending up with a broken leg having water along the Gold Coast highway at ten o'clock at night. This creates great anxiety for me.

Carers need a break and it needs to be within reason. Six months is not enough. May I suggest at least a completely free day and night at least once a month.

Yours sincerely,

Maureen [redacted]

PS I do not ask the government for carer money. My son has a disability pension & I have the basic age pension. I do not own a home nor vehicle. I am always frugal with my income. I also have L.D.D. and am about to have a tumour removed from my back (23rd June) for the third time. My ankle has not knitted well & this is also a problem.

[redacted]