

AOC 15/7/08

Sent: Tuesday, 1 July 2008 8:33 AM
To: Committee, FCHY (REPS)
Subject: FW: Better Support for Carers

From: Jan
Sent: Monday, 30 June 2008 5:07 PM
To: Committee, Repts (REPS)
Subject: Better Support for Carers

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth

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.

As a Carer for our 38 year old daughter who has an acquired brain injury as a result of a massive haemorrhage to the brain which occurred February 1999, I feel that my role is vitally important to ensure she has the best life can offer her and she achieves her optimum level of independence. Previous to this injury, she was living a fully independent life and worked as a Registered Nurse working in a full time capacity, but can no longer work.

I face the problem of also having a Husband who has suffered a chronic illness with Leukaemia and Diabetes for the past 10 years and is now becoming more debilitated as he is in a later stage of the Leukaemia and there is currently no cure. My Mother who is well and still relatively independent turns 86 this year - she lives alone and is needing more support as she ages. All three of these important family members are relying quite heavily on my time, guidance, practical and emotional support. I can not work as each day is unpredictable due to these circumstances. I need to be available for all three of these people. My daughter being the principal caree.

I need help with Centrelink making some provision for the hours per week a carer has to give when there are more than one caree. Currently each case is taken on an individual basis and Centrelink will only take a second or third caree into consideration if they individually require 20 hours or more per week, in my case this would have to total 60 hours minimum per week. My point is not to be given extra payment for any extra hours, but for us Carers to have recognition when in this situation. This would mean our caring role being considered over all we do for all carees during our week. In many Carer's lives this would mean they are indeed caring 20 hours or more, but not for one person only, which does not allow them to claim a Carer payment from Centrelink.

I think the Government can better help Carers by less pressure from Centrelink re our Carer payment/allowance once it has been established that the situation is permanent. Having proved our need to care for our daughter and that it is a permanent disability, it is time consuming and disheartening to have repeated questions. As my daughter gains a little more independence my Husband and Mother need more support and care. The overall care for the week is many more hours than 20 in total, but Centrelink only considers the hours given for our Daughter.

Another issue to consider where the Government can better help Carers is with the Commonwealth Funding packages which target individuals who wish to remain at home. These packages of care in most cases are managed by organizations that in turn outsource the supports required. This process eats into the available dollars and in effect reduces the number of hours available for face to face care. I understand another model used by a family in Victoria who care for their mother under the EACH Dementia funding model allows the

family to be in control of the funding and utilise the funding so that most of the money is made available for direct care. My primary need as a carer is to maximise the care for the available dollars. As carers we can be case managers and look after the interests of the needs of our disabled family member or elderly parent. The model also gives families the flexibility to employ carers and support persons who are known to the family or individuals being cared for. This familiarity maintains and develops a positive relationship between the person being cared for by the family member and the paid carer. This positive relationship is important as it ensures quality outcomes and consistency of care for the person who receives the care.

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

Janice