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Submission No. 947
(Inq into better support for carers)

To: fchy.reps@aph.gov.au
Sent: Friday, July 04, 2008 1:18 PM
Subject: re needs of carers

4th July, 2008

Committee Secretary,
Standing Committee, Community, Housing and Youth,
P.O. Box 6021,
House of Representatives,
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

I wish to make a submission to the House of Representatives Standing on Family, Community, Housing and Youth's Inquiry into better support for carers.

I feel my role as a carer of my 17 year old son who has multiple disabilities is an important one. It is one I willingly do, but the financial needs of our family are very high because of it. One of our biggest needs is acquiring a new van to be able to transport him to his appointments etc. Cost of this is \$65,000.

I face the following problems:

1. Being able to access appropriate carers to assist me in personal care for my son 5 days per week. One of the agencies I use has cut my funding from 180 hours to 120 hours for the next financial year. **THIS AGENCY EMPLOYS IN TWO HOUR SLOTS - I CAN USE THEM FOR THE SHORTFALL BUT THEY WILL CHARGE \$35.00 PER HOUR AND IT WILL MEAN THAT EVEN THOUGH I ONLY USE ONE HOUR - I PAY FOR TWO AND MY ONE HOUR OF CARE WILL COST \$70.00.** I now need to find another agency to fill the shortfall. Some of the people sent in are inappropriate and this causes such stress on the family. I have been told in the past that our local council cannot continue long term to give me adequate care for my son.

2. The second issue relates to hoists in hospital. My son is 170cms tall and weighs 73kgs. He is unable to stand. The hoist and slings we use at home work well. In the hospitals they use many different types of hoists - each hoist has a specific sling and therefore they cannot be used on any other hoist. The slings that are used in the hospital cannot be put into my sons chair while he is sitting in the chair - this is because the chair is such a tight fit - it makes it very difficult as my son has frequent trips to hospital. I am trying to contact the various hospitals but it is a nightmare. The hospitals I refer to are Southern Health in Victoria - Dandenong, Monash, Casey.

I think it would be very helpful if the hospitals all had the same type of hoists so that it would mean care for our sons and daughters would be easier. Apparently each of the ward have their own funding and buy what they wish. It would be good if there was some communication between wards so that there are uniform hoists in the whole hospital or slings they can be used on a variety of hoists.

3. Another issue we face is transport to his adult facility. The organisation who cares for our son after he leaves school does not have enough vehicles to transport wheelchairs. This again puts pressure on us and we either have to transport ourselves or use wheelchair taxis - another expense.

Yours sincerely,