



Press Statement 18 October 2019

Plight of carers is worse than that found ten years ago. ‘Paying the Price: The Hidden Impact of Caring’ launched.

Dr John Hillery, President of the College of Psychiatrists, with Family Carers Ireland, launched a second in a series of reports revealing the harrowing and extreme consequences of caring that family carers regularly face.

The second report of *‘Paying the Price’* undertaken by the College, Family Carers Ireland (FCI) and UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, highlights how family carers are expected to fill substantial and significant service gaps in health and social care systems at huge physical and psychological expense to them.

Almost half of family carers regularly deal with abusive behaviour while a similar proportion say that no supports and services are available. These are just some of the findings of this new research report which examines family carers’ access to supports and services, how this can affect their health and the daily challenges they face including exposure to abusive behaviours

The report launch came a day after Family Carers Ireland and their members protested outside Leinster House following anger at the 2020 budget announced last week that did not address the help and support needed by carers in Ireland who save the state a massive 10 billion euro per annum.

Dr John Hillery, President of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland in welcoming the completion of the survey expressed dismay at the fact that the results indicate that the plight of carers is worse than that found ten years ago in the first Carers/ College of Psychiatrists of Ireland survey.

Reflecting **Dr Hillery** asked if this is because the people who should be helping improve the lot of carers are no longer listening?

‘my belief is best represented by a play on the lines of Yeats, I wonder if too long listening to tales of sacrifice has made a stone of the heart of those who should help. We all must reflect on our roles, Clinicians, Politicians and Administrators and ask are we listening to carers and are we responding in ways that help?’

This is the second in a series of *Paying the Price** reports and follows a nationwide health and wellbeing survey completed by 1,102 current family carers between November 2018 and January 2019. The survey is a repeat wave of a similar survey undertaken in 2009 and allows researchers to track changes in the health, wellbeing and burden of carers ten years later.

The report, launched at Family Carers Ireland’s National Carers’ Conference in The Hilton, Kilmainham, Dublin 8 shows that:

- 44% of carers surveyed regularly deal with abusive behaviour
- 70% of carers experiencing abuse as part of their caring role said their loved one did not have access to suitable respite
- 76% of care recipients did not receive any home support hours

- 74% of care recipients requiring 100+ hours of care per week had no access to home support hours
- 49% of carers said that no supports and services were available
- 79% of carers supporting children with care needs found it difficult to make ends meet
- 25% of carers could not access supports and services due to distance and/or transport issues
- 43% of carers said that supports and services were not disability, condition and/or age appropriate

Key recommendations highlighted at the launch by Dr Nikki Dunne, Research Officer with Family Carers Ireland, include:

- **Recognise carers as victims of abuse** – Further research and public discussion on the impact of physical and verbal abuse on family carers is key to recognising carers as victims of abuse and developing effective interventions to allow them to care safely.
- **Urgently address the homecare crisis and postcode lottery** – Funding of €3.2 million per annum is required to support family carers and ensure that they are guaranteed access to a basket of supports and services regardless of where they live.
- **Address the transport needs of carers** – Replace the Mobility Allowance and Motorised Transport Grant Schemes, withdrawn in 2013, with the long-awaited Transport Support Scheme and widen the criteria of the Disabled Drivers and Passengers Scheme to include people with intellectual or cognitive impairments.
- **Abolish the In Loco Parentis rule** – Organisations involved in supporting children and families are united in their call to end the in loco parentis rule and the unfair restrictions it places on the families of Ireland's most vulnerable children.
- **Introduce practical approaches to protecting carers at risk of harm** – Train healthcare professionals to identify and support carers, offer carers training, provide emergency respite care services, involve all agencies who play a role in safeguarding adults and children

Full report available on www.familycarers.ie and www.irishpsychiatry.ie

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Notes to Editor:

**Paying the Price: The Physical, Mental and Psychological Impact of Caring* was produced by Family Carers Ireland in collaboration with the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland and UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems.

The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland was formed in 2009. It is the professional body for psychiatrists in the Republic of Ireland. The Mission of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland is to promote excellence in the practice of psychiatry. The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland is the sole body recognised by the Medical Council and the HSE for the training of doctors to become specialists in psychiatry and for the continuing assurance of the career long competence of specialists in psychiatry