



Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Re: Carers Australia Submission to Senate Inquiry into the Health Legislation (eHealth) Bill 2015 October 2015

Background

Carers Australia is the national peak body representing the diversity of Australians who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends with a disability, chronic condition, mental illness or disorder, drug or alcohol problem, terminal illness or who are frail aged.

Carers Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide input to this inquiry.

There are 2.7 million family and friend carers in Australia, 770,000 of which provide the most substantial amount of care to one or more people with disability, chronic condition, mental illness or disorder, drug or alcohol problem, terminal illness or who are frail aged.

The 2012 Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers reports that 19 percent of primary carers provide between 20 and 39 hours of care a week and 40 percent provide 40 or more hours of care per week. Some 280,000 co-resident primary carers report that the person they care for cannot be left for more than a day without difficulty.

Support for the opt-out approach

Carers Australia supports the opt-out approach proposed in the eHealth Bill. We note that the Regulation Impact Statement outlined in the Explanatory Memorandum identified that an opt-out approach would benefit family carers as they "currently face more challenges in accessing timely and appropriate healthcare and will have more to benefit from improved health outcomes". Carers Australia supports the view that carers are less likely to participate in an opt-in model and are more likely to be challenged by the registration process.

Yours sincerely

ARA CRESSWELL
Chief Executive Officer

26 October 2015