

# Respite Weekend for Family Carers

The recent Caring for Carers Ireland 17th National Weekend & Conference at the Clare Inn Hotel, Dromoland was attended by over 600 Carers from all over the country

Prof. **Brendan Drumm** who opened the Conference, said *"I am humbled to be in the presence of these dedicated people who represent 161,000 Family Carers from throughout Ireland.*

*As a paediatrician I particularly understand the concerns and dedication of parents who care for children with special needs, especially the mother who expressed that it was an honour to care for her daughter for 25 years, who had a rare disability".*

At this time of change in the HSE there is universal recognition that Carers make a very significant contribution to the health and welfare of communities across the country. They are significant contributors to the HSE's overall purpose which is to enable people live healthy and fulfilled lives in their own homes and communities.

Speaking on Saturday, **Laverne McGuinness** said that in her work as National Director of PCCC, HSE she was very aware of the role that Family Carers play in our society and the critical importance of Carers support and advocacy groups such as Caring for Carers Ireland.

She acknowledged that Caring for Carers Ireland's respite programme, of which this weekend is a major part, is hugely important – an estimated 6,000 people have benefited from various respite breaks as well as social outings. She highlighted the organisation's delivery of home care packages in conjunction with the HSE, over the past 2 years which means that many people can now benefit from this new initiative.

She publicly praised the enormous contribution Family Carers make to the people they care for and to society in general. *"I also want to recognise the valuable work that Caring for Carers Ireland does in supporting Carers. The HSE appreciates the work of your organisation and will continue to fund and support your efforts".*

**Helen Kelly**, chairperson of Caring for Carers Clare Branch, described her life as a Carer and thanks her family for their support. She addressed a number of important issues to government. *"Do not exploit a labour of love. Respect Carers for the tremendous work they do. It is the lives of Carers that you deal with. Carers save the state hundreds of millions of euros each year."* Finally, she stressed that *"there is an urgent need to provide pension credits for Carers who do not qualify for a contributory old age pension".*

**Brigid Barron** Research and Programme Manager and founder President of Eurocarers said that *"The obligation of caring for vulnerable people can not rest with the family alone. The burden is too great and the resources are too few – not everyone is*

*capable of providing care and not everyone has family members or friends available to do so. What Carers need most is sustained and adequate Respite, home care services and an income to support them in their caring role. The forthcoming National Carers Strategy must be underpinned by legislation if it is to be effective."*

**Marian Harkin MEP** reiterated this sentiment when she said that the forthcoming National Carers Strategy must provide a framework to insure that "*today's Carers do not become the poor older people of tomorrow*".

**Mary McMahon CEO** of Caring for Carers Ireland said that "*in today's changing society it is important to sustain Carers who are the crucial providers of care in the community. The National Carers Strategy must be adequate to address the current needs of Carers in our society and also build a framework which will continue through to 2016.*

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**Caring for Carers aims to promote the Health, Wellbeing and Quality of Life of Family Carers and those for whom they care, by promoting recognition of their role providing Respite Care, Information, Training and Advocacy to promote Social Inclusion, within the context of The Carers' Charter**

**Programme for Government 2007-2013**

**<http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/index.asp?locID=566&docID=3493>**

**National Women's Strategy 2007-2016**

**<http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PB07000395>**

**National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016**

**<http://www.socialinclusion.ie/documents/NAPinclusionReportPDF.pdf>**

**European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland**

**<http://www.eapn.ie/>**

**Information for All**

**<http://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/>**