

Flu vaccines

This years influenza campaign guidelines have been issued and have included a new at risk group. The department of health has included Carers on the list of people who can receive the influenza vaccine. The letter from the Chief Medical Officer, which describes the 2005 Influenza immunisation campaign describes the new group as; "people who are the main Carer for an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill".



0191 387 1991

I will be working with Carer Link Workers within practices in October to ensure Carers who are registered with practices are aware of this opportunity.

If you would like to discuss specific promotional ideas please contact me.

HSA Carer Aware Awards

Research already shows that 80% of Carers admit their caring role has an adverse effect on their health. In fact even the 83% of Carers that admit their health is not good only regularly deal with GPs on behalf of the person they care for. Yet the greatest worry for most Carers is the concern over what would happen to the person they look after if they themselves became ill and could no longer fulfil their caring obligations. GPs therefore have a vital role to play in this by encouraging those who care for someone to look after their own health and get regular check ups.

The new GP contracts begin to help Carers, however The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and HSA believe that many GPs do a lot more and through these awards we want to share ideas and good practice with GPs across the UK.

The HSA Carer Aware Awards give doctors the chance to show how they support Carers and provides practices the chance to win up to £2500! Last year Pelton and Fellrose practice were runners up the only practice in the north east to be highlighted. Four awards will be given to GPs:

1. HSA Gold Award – £2,500 for the winning surgery
2. Two HSA Silver Awards – £1,000 each for the winning surgeries
3. Carers Choice Award – This award is slightly different as carers nominate their GP for this. The winning surgery will receive a £350 Marks and Spencer voucher and a framed certificate and the nominating carer will also receive £350 Marks and Spencer voucher.

80% of Carers say that caring affects their health

There is an application form included in this mailing for further copies of the application form email: gpawards@carers.org or contact me, Tina on 0191 387 1991.

Surgery Referrals

Every Carer who contacts our service is asked where they heard about us, then, when registered with our service is asked if they want to us to notify their GP that they are a Carer, these checks help us to identify and record for statistical purposes.

The figures for this quarter show that Chastleton Surgery has the most carers wanting to be registered with their GP, with Bridge End Surgery second and Pelton medical group third. These figures are reflected in the total referrals from the surgeries with Chastleton surgery with 19 Carers identified, Bridge End with 13 and Fellrose with 11 Carers identified. With the majority of referrals being identified through the surgery notice boards.

Total numbers of Carers registered by our service with their GP from 2002 to date, again Chastleton have the most, Claypath are second and Bridge End are third.

Carer Statistics
February - June 05
110 Referrals
38% of which are from Primary Care

Total registered with service:
1024
To June 2005

Discharge report

In light of feedback received from Carers relating to their negative experience of hospital discharge arrangements, including patient readmissions and Carers being expected to cope with unacceptable caring situations, an audit has recently been undertaken to ascertain current practice and collaborative working within the hospital discharge process, to identify and support Carer's needs and issues. The audit included hospitals within County Durham and also those outside whose catchment area serves County Durham residents.

The Summary of Findings clearly indicate that although good practice does exist, there are several areas requiring consideration, as detailed within the reports recommendations, including; Carer awareness training for staff, an information leaflet relating to Carers Centres' should be made available to all Carers prior to discharge. This will give Carers the opportunity to discuss any concerns they have regarding a new caring role or increasing an existing one, and ensure they are fully supported after discharge. An unsupported discharge also impacts on primary care, Carers do not know who to turn to and therefore rely heavily on primary care teams.

A seminar has been organised in light of the audit report which will include a brief presentation on the audit, legal aspects of the discharge process, and a presentation on a research project regarding hospital discharge undertaken by Hilary Snowdon, Research Fellow at Northumbria University. The event will be held on the 13th September, if you would like more details on the audit report, or would like to attend the seminar give me a call on 0191 387 1991.

Psychiatry Training to involve Carers "Training the Trainers"

The Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Princess Royal Trust for Carers joined together to mount a campaign to highlight the problems faced by Carers of people with mental health disabilities. The campaign also encourages true partnerships between Carers, patients and professionals. As a result The Royal College of Psychiatrists has made it mandatory for Carers to be involved in the basic training of Psychiatrists from June 2005

The health effects of caring

Carers UK have published a report "Health Inequalities and Informal Care" after research was carried out by Michael Hirst, funded by the UK Department of Health. The study found that emotional and mental health problems are more often associated with caregiving than physical health problems. Carers are more likely than non-Carers to report high levels of psychological distress, which can include anxiety, depression, and loss of confidence and self-esteem. Taken together the findings draw attention to the physical, psychological, social and financial stress that some Carers face and the isolation that often accompanies a demanding caring role. Maintaining Carers health and ensuring their access to health service are important in their own right. Promoting Carers health may also bring health and other benefits to the person they care for. If caregiving ends because of Carer ill health, the health service may be faced with two patients where previously there was only one, supported by an unpaid Carer.

The report highlighted that identifying Carers is the first step towards providing timely, appropriate and ongoing support. GP's and members of the primary care team, including district nurses and health visitors are expected to play a key role in supporting Carers, and the GP surgery is probably the best place to identify them as over 80 % of women and more than 70% of men consult a GP within 6 months before or after starting to provide care; heavily involved Carers contact GPs more often. Once identified, Carers can be informed of their rights to assessment and put in touch with social services, Carers Centres'.

The main recommendations of the report states that early intervention of Carers is likely to be important for increasing the effectiveness of health promotion and prevention initiatives, and tackling Carers need for information, training and personal development to help them balance caring responsibilities alongside their other roles. Opportunities for low-level health measures should not be missed, for example free flu vaccines and alternative therapies to reduce stress - this is offered through our service one hour treatment for £35. Investing small amounts of resources in Carer support could prevent serious deteriorations and crises in Carers health and well being that might otherwise have costly implications for health and social services. The research also suggested that when substantial amounts of care are provided over an extended period, Carers health should be checked at least once a year or whenever a suitable opportunity arises. This would be a valuable and practical service to offer Carers who are REED coded and on the practice Carers register.

If you would like a copy of the report or to discuss any of the issues raised in the research please do not hesitate to contact me on 0191 387 1991.

Parent Carers

To highlight our continued developments in supporting Parent Carers, all our noticeboards have been updated with the following information:

Are you the Parent / Carer of a child or young person with a Disability or Health Difficulty?

Durham & Chester le Street Carers Support offer Advice, Information and Support for you.



Contact us on

0191 387 1991



Information & Advice

- q Home Visits and Telephone Support
Emotional Support and a listening ear
- q Benefit Check and support to fill in forms
- q Information on what services are available and advice on how to access them
- q Links to specific National & Local support available

Education

- q Information & Advice on how to get the support in school for your child's Special Educational Needs
- q Support at formal and informal meetings
- q Aqualified Independent Parental Supporter

Events

- q Information events and workshops on specific issues, for example sleep difficulties and how to deal with challenging behaviour
- q Support Group Meetings
- q Social Events and Trips
- q Holistic Therapy Counselling

Transition

- q Focussed Support for Parents/Carers of young people with disabilities aged 14-25 years
- q Ensuring Carers views are properly considered at the time of change
- q Information about access to work / volunteer placements, further education and independent living
- q Supporting families to access services as they plan for the future

Parent Carer News by Jenni Wood Parent Carer Support Worker

We have been able to extend the support we offer Parent Carers recently following a successful bid to the Big Lottery for a full time support worker to work with families of young people aged 14 to 25. Steve Wingate has been funded for 2 years to develop this area of support. My role is to support to Parents of children up to the age of 13. A large part of this work involves supporting families of children in mainstream education to get the support they need for their child. Alongside this is the support around benefits and accessing appropriate services.

Workshops for Parents

Following consultation with Parent Carers coupled with the results of the Carers Survey from Social Care and Health, the need for support around dealing with challenging behaviour and parenting issues was highlighted. We have now secured funding from the Local Network Grant to offer a series of Workshops, Training and Events. Contact us for more details.

Events

Over the summer we had two successful trips for families to Mr Twister's and South Shields. A total of 50 Parents and Children attended these events. Many of the Parents we support are very isolated due to either lack of transport, financial reasons or behavioural difficulties of the children they support. Our trips are an essential part of the support we offer to overcome the isolation, offer mutual support and understanding as well as an accessible fun day.

Time Out For Special Needs is a course for Parents with a special needs child. It is based around Positive Parenting and includes input from families with special needs children. It consists of 7 sessions covering areas such as "Developing Self Esteem", "Managing Behaviour" and "Home / School issues". There is no charge to parents and free transport and a creche will be available to ensure accessibility.

A series of Parent Carer Workshops will begin on 27th September. The first is presented by Helen Geldard and will look at children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders and how this affects

their behaviour. It will concentrate on what triggers difficult behaviours and how to deal with these.

The other workshops will be based around the issues of supporting children with a range of difficulties including ADHD, ASD and challenging behaviour.

Representation and Participation

A key role of both Steve and myself is to ensure that Parent Carers views and voice is heard and informs the development of services in the Durham and Chester le Street area. We are involved in a number of groups including the Every Child Matters in County Durham Consultation Process, The Children and Young Peoples Planning Group, The Family Support and Parental Outreach Working Party and the Positive Inclusion Partnership. We will continue to consult with Parent Carers to ensure they are aware of developments and take up opportunities to get involved.

For more information on how to refer a Parent or if you have any other questions contact Jenni or Steve on 0191 387 1991.