

Across the country, over 10% of our total population provides unpaid care to loved ones living with a chronic condition, disability, or illness, often with no formal healthcare training. Carers are invaluable to those they are looking after, but the role does not come without challenges. Carers may find that being a carer can negatively impact their social and financial status as well as affect their mental and physical health. So how do we make sure that carers themselves are being cared for?

Released today by the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association's (AHHA) Deeble Institute for Health Policy Research, the Issues Brief '[Prioritising carers' health and wellbeing in the healthcare system](#)' examines the pressures carers are under, the limited support currently available and how clinicians and our health system can best safeguard their health and wellbeing.

This Brief was co-authored by 2023 Deeble Scholar Dr Natalie Winter from the Institute for Health Transformation at Deakin University. The scholarship program is supported by HESTA.

'There is limited data available to show a true picture of carers in Australia, who they are, and what their needs are,' says AHHA Chief Executive, Kylie Woolcock.

'Carers not only provide a significant contribution to their families but also reduce healthcare spending, saving the government over \$77 billion in 2020 alone.'

'This contribution is not currently being recognised in a manner that looks to improve long-term health outcomes for carers. While frameworks to assess carers' needs do exist, they have not been implemented in a way that gives us comprehensive national data to appropriately guide government spending and allocation of resources and services for carers.'

'This Brief recommends four crucial strategies to address the gaps in knowledge around carers' needs, and how to support health services and clinicians to provide quality and meaningful care to carers.'

'These strategies include collecting more complete data around carers' wellbeing, service use and using standardised needs assessment frameworks. We should also be including carers, patients, and clinicians in the co-design of system changes, and providing more education and support for clinicians treating carers.'

'We also need to consider that some people do not identify with the term 'carer' and be mindful of this when developing new frameworks so that we include these often missed 'hidden carers'.'

'Carers in all forms are a huge piece of our health system, and we should be doing everything we can to help support their health and wellbeing.'

The online version of this [media release](#) and the Issues Brief '[Prioritising carers' health and wellbeing in the healthcare system](#)' can be found on the AHHA website. **The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) is the independent peak membership body and advocate for the Australian healthcare system and a national voice for universally accessible, high-quality healthcare in Australia.**

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