Carer Gateway is a new national carer service which provides reliable information specifically for unpaid carers.

Funded by the Australian Government, Carer Gateway provides information about the services and support available for people who care for someone with a disability, chronic illness, dementia, mental illness or who is frail aged.

General Practitioners can refer carers directly to Carer Gateway, and be confident that carers will receive trustworthy advice relevant to their caring situation.

Information available on Carer Gateway includes:

- Telephone: Carers can call 1800 422 737 from Monday to Friday between 8am and 6pm for information about services and support. They can also request a call back from the contact centre via a form on the website.
- Website: Carers can visit www.carergateway.gov.au to access information about caring and support services available to them.

Who are carers?

There are around 2.7 million carers in Australia. Carers may look after someone with a disability, mental illness, dementia, chronic condition, terminal illness, alcohol or drug problem or someone who is frail aged.

Carers provide unpaid support and assistance with daily activities, such as getting to appointments, buying groceries, personal care and cleaning.

Carers can be family or friends, parents, children, siblings, grandparents or neighbours.
Recognising carers in your practice

Patients in your practice who require assistance from another person to attend their doctor’s appointments are likely to be supported by a carer. The carer may be the person who attends the appointment, or it may be another family member or friend.

Research shows that caring for someone can greatly impact the life of the carer, both physically and emotionally. Many carers do not reach out for help when they need it. Referred to as ‘hidden carers’, these carers do not identify, or recognise themselves as carers. Carer Gateway will be particularly valuable for these hidden carers as they are not likely to know about the information, services and support available to them.

It is important that health professionals and other staff identify carers in your practice and encourage them to access Carer Gateway.

Why are carers important?

Carers play a vital and often unrecognised role in the health system. For every patient diagnosed with a serious condition, someone is usually helping them with day to day activities such as getting to appointments, buying groceries, personal care and cleaning.

Depending on the situation, caring responsibilities can last for years and can put strain on the carer’s own wellbeing and can increase the likelihood of depression.¹

How can General Practice assist carers?

As part of a General Practice, you are interacting with carers on a daily basis and have a unique opportunity to assist them to maintain their wellbeing. This can be as simple as:

1. Helping them identify themselves as carers.
2. Capture information of carers in your practice management software.
3. Enquire about the wellbeing of carers at patient appointments.
4. Assist carers to access information and services through Carer Gateway.

How can General Practices encourage carers to use Carer Gateway?

2. If a carer is attending an appointment with a patient, give them a brochure to take home.
3. Download a Carer Gateway information factsheet from the promotional materials page on the website and give to any person who is applying for Carer Payment.
4. Include links to Carer Gateway on your website, social media channels or in your newsletters.

1800 422 737
Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm

carergateway.gov.au


² Cummins, Robert A & Australian Unity (Firm) & Australian Centre on Quality of Life & Deakin University. School of Psychology & Carers Australia (2007). The wellbeing of Australians carer health and wellbeing.