

## **73,000 Male Family Carers recognised during National Carers Week and Men's Health Week, June 10<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup>**

National Carers Week and Men's Health Week are being celebrated across the country, with many events to support and acknowledge the tremendous caring work of men in Ireland. According to Census 2011, men make up over one third (39%) of Family Carers in the Ireland, an increase of 16.8% between Census 2006 and 2011.

Speaking about male carers, Liam O'Sullivan of Care Alliance Ireland, co-ordinator of National Carers Week said: "The Department of Health's National Men's Policy 2008-2013 has as its strategic aim: to target specific men's health policy initiatives in the home that accommodate diversity within family structures and that reflect the multiple roles of men as husbands/partners, fathers and carers. A study undertaken by Care Alliance Ireland in 2008 showed that male carers were 1.6 times more likely to have a lower quality of life than female carers, so we must acknowledge the impact a caring role can have on a man's health and well being."

Colin Fowler of Men's Health Forum in Ireland, co-ordinator of Men's Health Week noted: "Although census data reveals that male carers are more likely to report full-time caring as well as being in paid employment, men with no formal education or educated only to primary level were the most likely category of male carers. All carers need to be supported and recognised, but we may need to reach out a bit more to male carers to make sure we are meeting their needs."

A survey of 250 Family Carers, undertaken as part of National Carers Week found that while Family Carers value the rewards caring can bring, there can be emotional, physical and financial burdens. The right supports go a significant way, however to mitigate the strain.

Supporting the week again this year, well known TV presenter Nuala Carey said; "I know all too well how important Family Carers are, particularly in enabling people to continue to live at home. The week is a fantastic celebration of the contribution Family Carers make to our loved ones' lives and it's an opportunity for us all to do something extra special for Family Carers in our community."

This week, every person in the country has a chance this week to acknowledge the contribution of Ireland's 73,000 male Family Carers.

"This week we should focus on doing something for those that contribute so much to Irish society. Whether you just call in, make them a meal, offer your help and support or if they are far away give them a call to say 'you are doing something really important', there is a huge value in simply saying 'thank-you'," says Liam O'Sullivan, Executive Director, Care Alliance Ireland.

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### **Notes to the Editor:**

**About National Carers Week:** National Carers Week, now in its seventh year, is co-ordinated by Care Alliance Ireland in partnership with eight other leading Irish charities who support family carers: The Alzheimer Society, The Carers Association, Caring for Carers, The Disability Federation of Ireland, MS Ireland, The Parkinsons Association, Bri, and The Irish Hospice Foundation.

Family Carers are usually immediate relatives who provide very high levels of care, at home, for children and adults with severe disabilities, frail older people and people who are terminally ill.

The 2011 Census estimates there to be in the region of 187,000 Family Carers in Ireland. Census 2011 also provides an estimate of Family Carers in each county.

A continually updated list of Carers Week events in each county is available at <http://www.carersweek.ie/events>

Care Alliance Ireland is leading in the co-ordination of the week. [www.carealliance.ie](http://www.carealliance.ie) or further information contact: Liam O'Sullivan 087 207 3265 [ndo@carealliance.ie](mailto:ndo@carealliance.ie)

National Carers Week 2013 is supported by EBS.

### ***About Men's Health Week***

International Men's Health Week (MHW) always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. This year, it will run from Monday 10th until Sunday 16th June 2013.

It is celebrated in most European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand and a number of other places worldwide. The overall aims of MHW are to:

Heighten awareness of preventable health problems for males of all ages.

Support men and boys to engage in healthier lifestyle choices / activities.

Encourage the early detection and treatment of health difficulties in males.

Each year, there is also a focus upon a specific theme. **This year, the theme in Ireland will be 'Action Men: Turning Words into Actions'.**

MHW gives everyone (health professionals, service providers, sporting bodies, community groups, employers, policy makers, the media, individuals ... an opportunity to encourage men and boys to take better care of their health and to seek help or treatment at an early stage.

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) coordinates activity on the island of Ireland and cooperates with other Men's Health Fora across Europe, and further afield, to mark this week.