

Identification of unpaid carers in UK hospitals sees improved patient care

February 14, 2019 (London, UK) –

Carer Passports, a UK initiative championed by Carers UK that recognises the role of unpaid carers in the UK health system, has been selected as a global innovative practice by the International Alliance of Carer Organizations (IACO) and global group Embracing Carers™.

A 2017 Embracing Carers™ global carer survey revealed that more than a quarter (24%) of unpaid carers looking after a loved one who is older, disabled or seriously ill feel their role as a carer is not recognised within the healthcare system - despite the critical role they play in maintaining their loved one's health.

Carer Passports are a simple and effective tool to help hospitals identify unpaid carers and gather important insight that informs patient care. They bring better co-ordination, understanding and communication between hospital staff and carers and have shown to improve care and health outcomes for patients.

Carer Passports also help carers to feel more valued and become more confident about what they can expect from hospital staff. The scheme provides carers with access to support with their role such as free hospital parking, discounts in the hospital canteen or information and resources, depending on what benefits the hospital is able to offer.

Carers UK has championed the use of Carer Passports in hospitals and was funded by the Department of Health and Social Care¹ to develop a suite of [resources](#) to help hospitals develop and implement Carer Passport schemes, such as template application forms and publicity posters.

Emily Holzhausen OBE, Director of Policy and Public Affairs at Carers UK, said:

“Too often carers do not receive the recognition and support they need in the health care system, yet they play a vital role ensuring their loved one's safety and quality of life. Their knowledge can be of great value to hospital staff, whether that's providing information about their loved one's conditions, observing symptoms or noting side effects to treatment or medication.

“Carer Passports offer hospitals a systematic approach to identifying carers, meaning carers are both more likely to identify themselves and more likely to feel valued and supported in their role.”

Nadine Henningsen, Board Chair of IACO, said:

“Recognising carers, encouraging them to self-identify and including them as part of an integrated care team is a significant challenge for most health and social care systems. Through the global ICP initiative, we can share innovative practices, such as the Carer Passport, and encourage health care organizations in other countries to learn, adapt and replicate evidence-informed practices to support the vital role of carers.”

Carer Passports is the second practice featured as part of a global Innovative Carer Practices (ICP) series to spread and scale new ways to support carers around the world.

¹ The Department of Health and Social Care funded the development of Carer Passports in a number of settings. Carers UK led on developing the initiative in workplaces, hospitals and community organisations and Carers Trust in schools, universities and mental health trusts.

In December 2018 IACO and Embracing Carers released an Innovative Carer Practice “Family Carer Training Programme” from Ireland. Later in 2019, two more innovations will be released as part of the series featuring a leading carer practice in France and Taiwan. To learn more about the Innovative Carer Practices initiative and download the “Carer Passport” ICP, visit <http://internationalcarers.org/innovative-carer-practices/>

Notes to Editors

About the International Alliance of Carer Organizations (IACO)

The International Alliance of Carer Organizations (IACO) is a global coalition of 15 member nations committed to building a global understanding and respect for the vital role of family carers. Recognised as an official NGO by the United Nations, IACO works to improve the quality of life and support the needs of carers, through international partnerships and advocacy. To learn more, visit www.internationalcarers.org

Contact: Catherine Suridjan csuridjan@cdnhomecare.ca

About Embracing Carers™

Launched in 2017, Embracing Carers™ is a global initiative led by Merck in collaboration with leading carer organisations around the world to increase awareness and discussion about the often-overlooked needs of carers.

Carer organisations collaborating with Merck include the Caregiver Action Network, Carers Australia, Carers Canada, Carers UK, Carers Worldwide, Eurocarers, National Alliance for Caregiving, International Alliance of Carer Organizations (IACO) and Shanghai Roots & Shoots, China.

About Carers UK

Carers UK is a charity led by carers, for carers – our mission is to make life better for carers.

- We give expert advice, information and support
- We connect carers so no-one has to care alone
- We campaign together for lasting change
- We innovate to find new ways to reach and support carers

For practical advice and information about caring, www.carersuk.org or email advice@carersuk.org.

The [Carers UK Forum](http://www.carersuk.org/forum) is our online community of carers and is available to Carers UK members 24 hours a day, 365 days a year: www.carersuk.org/forum.

Website: www.carersuk.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/carersuk

Twitter: [@CarersUK](https://twitter.com/CarersUK)

Carers UK is a charity registered in England and Wales (246329) and in Scotland (SC039307) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (864097).

Please contact the Carers UK press office on:

- 020 7378 4937 (9am-5pm, Monday-Friday)
- 07534 487 027/ 07941 273 108 (out of hours)
- media@carersuk.org