

Health and wellbeing of SA's Carers at risk

New research has revealed some disturbing statistics about the physical, social, emotional and mental health needs of the growing number of adult carers in South Australia.

The study, *The Health and Wellbeing of Adult Family Carers in South Australia*, released on Monday February 11, found that 70% of carers reported that they had one or more chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma, arthritis and cardiovascular disease. This was significantly more than non-carers.

Ms Warmington said the study, compiled by the Department of Health, highlighted that it was time to address the personal health care needs of carers.

"This study is critical because it provides evidence over a 10 year period that quantifies the extent to which the health and wellbeing of our carers in SA is being affected," Ms Warmington said.

"The lack of adequate assistance for carers means they are at risk of becoming a patient themselves and then who would care for both the carer and the person they care for?"

"We don't want to have two patients because of lack of action.

Ms Warmington said that the local study further vindicated a national report released late last year that found more than one third of family carers nationwide were severely depressed and/or stressed.

"Carers have the lowest wellbeing index score ever seen for any large group in Australia and now we can see our own South Australian carers are suffering just as much," She said.

"Carers SA is currently working with the State Government in the planning stages to help address this issue and we look forward to helping find some solutions."

Ms Warmington recommended the establishment of a formalised clinical health assessment of carers, amongst other initiatives, to help carers to address their own health needs.

The report is available on the Department of Health's Population Research and Outcome Studies Unit's website www.health.sa.gov.au/PROS/.