

PRESS RELEASE FOR NATIONAL BRAIN AWARENESS WEEK
“National Brain Awareness Week Conference highlights the burden on family carers”

March 9th 2009

A one day conference in Dublin tomorrow entitled “Always on my mind” hosted by the Neurological Alliance of Ireland and Care Alliance Ireland will highlight the challenges faced by carers of people with neurological conditions

Over 700,000 people in Ireland are affected by neurological conditions. Families of those who require full time care are at significant risk of anxiety, isolation and poor health as they struggle to manage the demands of someone who may have intellectual and behavioural changes as well as a physical disability.

The impact of neurological conditions on family carers is the theme of this year’s National Brain Awareness Week which takes place from March 9th to 15th .

“You’re living with this person and you know that this person is a totally different person” (Quote from a Family carer)

From research carried out by members of the Neurological Alliance, the national umbrella for neurological charities

- 67% of carers for people with Multiple Sclerosis provided care on their own and without support
- 51% of carers of MS provided care for over 45 hours a week
- Focus groups with families of people with acquired brain injury reported lack of information, isolation and feelings of loneliness and being overwhelmed.
- One in four in a survey of Alzheimer carers had given up work in order to care
- 63% of Alzheimers carers spent 14 or more hours a day caring
- 48% had to pay for additional help to care for the person with Alzheimers disease
- One in 10 carers of stroke patients at a risk of health problems themselves
- Carers receive little or no training for their role in managing the complex array of physical, intellectual and personality changes that can occur as a result of neurological conditions
- As the Irish population ages, more people with neurological conditions will require care

“We are very disappointed at the Government’s decision last week not to publish a National Carers Strategy” says Mags Rogers, Development Manager with the Neurological Alliance of Ireland. “This would have been an important step in recognising the vital role of family carers”.

NAI member organisations will be using the week to highlight individual neurological conditions through a range of events taking place all around the country.

To find out more, check out the NAI website, www.nai.ie or call 01 8724120.

