



EUFAMI Member Organisations and their Partners

Leuven, 8th October 2021

EUFAMI Press Statement to mark World Mental Health Day 2021

Family Carers provide on average 43 hours per week caring for someone with a mental health problem

To mark World Mental Health Day 2021, EUFAMI is releasing the full report on its study of the activities of carers of persons with mental health problems. The survey report was conducted in collaboration with the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Our survey of more than 700 caregivers across Europe and Canada highlights the tremendous, and too often hidden, value of caregiving. Potentially without the input of these, mainly close family, carers, undoubtedly some support would need to be provided instead by health and social care systems. In short, informal carers are fundamental to the functioning of any health and social care system.

Our report provides key findings such as:

The average length of the caring week exceeds the length of the working week

On average informal carers provide more than 43 hours of care every week, well in excess of the average working week. Average caring times did not differ significantly for different mental health problems. 41% of all carers have to balance caring with employment.

Carers who live with the person they support have much longer ‘caring weeks’

Carers who live with the person they support provide significantly higher levels of care than carers who live apart from the person they support; on average more than 65 hours a week compared to less than 26 hours per week.

The estimated economic value of informal care time is substantial

Across all countries, the average weekly value of caring time, as well as travel time and travel expenses, would be up to €1,441. Overall, if the weekly value of caring is extrapolated over an entire year, then the average value of caring hours would range between €74,907 or €61,026 depending on the costs measured.

EUFAMI is an NGO founded 19.12.1992 under Belgian law (nr 451 967 342). EUFAMI has members in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

EUFAMI is a full member of EPF (European Patients Forum).

EUFAMI is working with major European organisations, such as the EU and the World Health Organisation (WHO) to help improve the quality of life of persons affected by mental illness



Speaking at the publication of the report, the Acting President of EUFAMI, Mr André Decraene, *said*:

'We believe that this report can act as a catalyst for action. This is even more important now than when this study was commissioned. The reliance on family carers will probably have increased, while challenges faced by caregivers and the risks of isolation may well be heightened during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.'

John Saunders, Executive Director of EUFAMI commented:

'It is critical to invest in measures to support caregivers and identify potential risk factors that might lead to a breakdown in caregiving support. This must include payments for carers and professional advice, support and training.'

For the full report on the Value of Caring, key links on the findings and recommendations of the survey in five different languages (English, French, Spanish, Dutch and Finnish), please see [here](#).

For information on World Mental Health Day please visit: www.wfmh.global/

Contact Executive Director John Saunders via email at executive.director@eufami.org or by phone at 00353 879271292

About EUFAMI

EUFAMI was founded in 1992 in Belgium after a congress where carers from all over Europe shared their experiences of helplessness and frustration when living with severe mental illness. They resolved to work together to help both themselves and the people they cared for.

EUFAMI's mission is to represent all family members of persons affected by severe mental ill health at European level so that their rights and interests are recognised and protected.

About World Mental Health Day

World Mental Health Day was first celebrated in 1992 at the initiative taken by the World Federation of Mental Health. The overall objective of World Mental Health Day is to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world, to educate and to advocate against social stigma and to mobilise efforts in support of mental health.

The theme for WMHD 2021 is "Mental Health in an Unequal World". This theme was chosen by a global vote including WFMH members, stakeholders and supporters because the world is increasingly polarized due to highlighted inequalities on account of one's race and/or ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and people living with mental health issues. Such inequalities have an impact on people's mental health - WFMH

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