

council. It allows you to park in specially designated parking spots, and to stay twice as long in ordinary parking spots throughout Victoria. Contact your local Council.

*The Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme* helps pay for travel more than 100 kms each way for authorised specialist medical or dental treatment. Regional services: Barwon SE Tel 5226 4540, Hume Tel 5722 0555, Loddon Murray Tel 5434 5555, Grampians Tel 5177 2500 or Gippsland Tel 5352 0100.

## Respite Care

Discuss your need for respite with a pc team member *before* the need becomes urgent. Options include planned admission to a hospice or a respite carer attending the ill person at their home. Day hospice is available in some areas. DVA provides similar services to its clients. Some pc services can provide an overnight volunteer support worker. Ask for increased support as care needs increase. *Let the team know if you feel unable to leave the ill person in order to care for yourself.*

*Commonwealth Carer Respite* is provided in the patient's home, at day-care, for weekends or holidays or in a residential care setting. Waiting lists may apply (Statewide Tel 1800 059 059\*\*).

### *After Hours Advice and Service*

Check with your pc service *before the need arises*, for arrangements for after hours telephone advice, nurse and GP availability.

For emergency, out of hours *respite* care, ring the *Emergency Short Term Home Relief (ESTHR)* 1800 727 280\*\*. This free service will respond to a crisis that would otherwise result in the ill person being left without care, for example if you were ill, or had to accompany another family member to hospital. The service is similar to a responsible neighbour or friend. ESTHR is available to exhausted carers who have been sleep deprived for several nights and for whom the last straw is another night with broken sleep. ESTHR is available in Eastern, Western, & Northern Metro areas and the Grampians. Community languages are catered for.

## Emotional Support

Your pc team will assist you. Ask for a Volunteer Support Worker to be assigned to you. Carers Victoria's Common-wealth Carer Resource Centre (Tel 1800 242 636\*\*) provides free, friendly, professional support, information and referral as well as access to carer counselling and support groups.

Associations specific to the ill person's disease or condition may provide you with information and support. Ask your pc team, Palliative Care Victoria (PCV, see below) or Carer's Victoria (see above) or look in the Community Help pages of the phone book for the details of relevant organisations.

## Complaints

If you have a complaint about a service, discuss the matter with the person involved or the head of the service. If the response is not satisfactory, put your complaint in writing. If you are afraid you or the ill person will be discriminated against if you complain to a pc provider, contact PCV.

The Health Services Commissioner (Ph 8601 5200) accepts complaints about any health care provider or service.

Palliative Care

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*about*

## Resources for Carers

*Information and Advice for Carers*

Palliative Care

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Specialist health care and practical support

Level 2, 182 Victoria Parade  
East Melbourne VIC. 3002

**T** (03) 9662 9644

**F** (03) 9662 9722

**E** info@pallcarevic.asn.au

**I** www.pallcarevic.asn.au



Your Palliative Care Service is your most important resource. Ask a team member about any support you need now, or worry about for the future.

## Income Support

Living with a terminal illness often brings about change in financial circumstances. It can be wise to consult a financial advisor.

Check your eligibility for the *age pension* (Centrelink Retirement Office, (Tel 13 2300\*)).

*Carer Payment* is paid if you look after a person who needs constant (20 hours per week) care for an extended (six months) period. Income and assets tests are applied to both the person being cared for and the carer. If you have substantial assets but little or no income, and have not yet reorganised your financial affairs, *hardship provisions may apply*. A small *Carer Allowance*, not income or asset tested, is paid to similar (constant, extended) carers. (Centrelink Disability, Sickness and Carers Office, Tel 13 2717\*)

*Family Tax Benefit*, with no assets test and a generous income test, applies to those with dependent children (Family Assistance Office, Tel 13 6150\*)

The Centrelink website [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au) gives information on numerous benefits.

Check your eligibility for financial support with *Veteran's Affairs* (DVA, Tel 133254\* or regional 1800 555 254\*\*)

## Concession and Benefit Cards

A Pensioner Concession Card gives numerous health, Pharmaceutical (PBS) and other benefits. DVA Gold and some White Cards provide similar benefits.

A *Health Care Card*, provides substantial health, PBS and many other items for those on low incomes. The Family Assistance Office (Tel 13 6150\*) will help with these. These cards also give access to some other concessions.

\*local call fee only from ordinary phones

\*\*free from ordinary phones

Check your eligibility for concessions on *rates, utilities, stamp duty, motor registration and ambulance services* at the *Concessions Information Line* (Tel 1800 658 521\*\*).

A *Commonwealth Seniors Health Card* (Centrelink Retirement Office, Tel 13 2300\*) provides health, PBS and some other benefits to people of pension age who do not qualify for the pension. It has no assets test. Its income test is generous.

A *Victorian Seniors Card* (Tel 9603 8860, 1300 797 210\*) is available to Victorians over 60, who have retired or who work 35 hours per week or less. It has no assets or income test. It provides transport, leisure and shopping benefits.

A *Companion Card* enables the ill person to be accompanied free at participating cultural and sporting events (Tel 1800 650 611\*\*).

## Other Health Related Concessions

Low cost *Dental services and dentures* are available to pensioner concession and health care cardholders throughout Victoria (Tel 1300 360 054\*). Low cost Spectacles are available to the same cardholders through the College of Optometry (Tel 9349 7400) which also provides a rural service. No cost or low cost *hearing aids* are available to pensioner and some DVA care cardholders (Tel 8610 4300).

## Specialist Health Care and Practical Support

Contact your palliative care (pc) team. They will provide, or help you to obtain nursing and allied health care, practical support, minor modifications to your home, and special aids such as a shower chair, pressure care mattress etc. *Raise your worries about future needs with the pc team member.*

## Home Attendance by professionals

The ill person's solicitor, accountant, banker, etc, may visit free of extra cost if they know the circumstances. State Trustees provide a *domiciliary will-making and Power of Attorney* service (Tel 9667 6444,). *Domiciliary dentistry* is available to housebound people (Tel 9341 0417). *Domiciliary hearing tests and aids* are available for housebound Pensioner Concession and some DVA cardholders (Tel 8610 4300).

## Other Domiciliary Services

You may need proof of eligibility, usually a doctor's letter. Proof of financial hardship, such as a pensioner concession or health care card, will be needed for subsidised services. Waiting lists may apply. Most local councils provide *meals on wheels* and *home care help*. Home care helpers provide housekeeping, shopping and personal (not nursing) care. A *Home handyman* does essential maintenance and minor repairs. *Lawnmowing*, and *pet walking* may be available. DVA's Home Care program (Tel 1800 052 222\*) provides similar services to its clients.

Municipal *libraries* bring books, large print books, videos and CDs to housebound people. This is a free service.

## Home deliveries

Most *pharmacies* deliver to housebound people in their area. Ask the doctor to phone prescriptions to the pharmacy and leave the written orders with you, to be collected by the person who delivers the order. Prearrange this service with your pharmacy. Many *supermarkets* deliver your phoned or faxed order, often at nominal cost if you have a doctor's letter. *Department stores* will deliver a phoned order to account customers for a fee.

## Transport

The ill person may be eligible for an M40 or M50 (wheelchair) card, which allows them to *travel in a taxi at half price* (Tel 9320 4360, 1800 638802\*\*). A reduced *motor registration fee* is available to Pensioner Concession and some DVA cardholders (Tel 13 1171\*).

Free *ambulance travel* is available to Pensioner Concession, Health Care, and some DVA cardholders. If these don't apply to you, check with your health insurer to establish whether and under what conditions the ill person is covered for ambulance transport. Consider Ambulance Membership (Tel 1800 648 484\*\*). A waiting period may apply. Non-emergency ambulance travel is ordered by the doctor, clinic or hospital. *Emergency Ambulance 000*.

A *Disabled Parking Permit* is available from your local