

Carers Reward Card – Diabetes Australia –Vic’s response

1. What definition of Carer is considered the most appropriate by your organisation for the purposes of the Carers Rewards Card?

Diabetes Australia – Vic supports the ABS definition of a carer presented on page 2 of the discussion paper , " A person who provides unpaid , primary care to a person or person(s) with a disability, mental illness or who are frail. aged and foster carers"

It would be expected that the carers of people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes with the possible physical and mental health complications as well as co-occurring conditions would be eligible to use this card.

Children with type 1 diabetes and their families are a specific concern due to the extra time and care that those families need in adjusting to the diagnosis of type 1 diabetes. Studies have shown that the impact on a family is greater than if a child was diagnosed with leukaemia.

All people with diabetes who have developed complications of their diabetes rely enormously on their family and networks.

2. What are your priority focus areas and why?

Diabetes Australia – Vic is the peak consumer body and leading charity representing all people affected by diabetes and those at risk. We advocate for all Victorians with diabetes and those at risk. DA-Vic supports the view that family carers undertake a major role in helping those with diabetes across their lifetime.

3. What are the benefits/rewards are likely to be of most value to carers?

People affected by diabetes face a range of extra costs for medications, care and services. Subsidised access or rebates for such costs would be the most value to carers as well as timely access to more respite but this is not the intention of this card.

The rewards card focus is on providing cheaper access to social and recreational activities across Victoria with discounts and several free transport trips. This is an important aspect of preventing carers from “burn-out” and supporting the normal access to recreation for people with diabetes.

The items listed on page 3 will be of benefit to those who are able to access trains. It needs to be clear if the free travel is for two free return off- peak trips any where across Victoria and is the limit for 2 per year.

Development of a Carers Charter

The development of a charter for carers is an excellent opportunity to recognise the important work that carers perform. DA-Vic are happy to be involved in the development of the charter.

4. Which of the three eligibility models is favoured?

Option 3 is the preferred model. It is a broad - based model that is inclusive and firmly recognises all carers and their contributions. It does make it administratively easy and easier for carers to access.

DA-Vic would disseminate information to our members and health professionals about the Reward Card.

5. Alternative models

Often there can be many carers supporting a person. An alternative model would be to issue a carers card to the person with the disability or problem. This allows a variety of carers to share in the benefit. Examples might be if a partner needs to have free time, this would allow another member of the family to use the carers card for free travel on Sundays to take the person on an outing or get discounts for some activities.

It also settles the issue with parents of children with type 1 diabetes who are not in the low income bracket. These families would normally get minimal support. Issuing the carers card to the child allows each parent to "take turns" using the card, or can even be shared with siblings.