



Press release

PB13-027
22 april 2013
15:00 hrs

Providing voluntary care takes its toll

- **More than 1.5 million voluntary carers active in 2012**
- **Providing voluntary care weighs heavily on 1 in 7 carers**

More than one and a half million people in the Netherlands provide intensive or long-term voluntary care; 1 in 7 carers - about 220 thousand people - feel burdened to some extent. Most voluntary carers are aged between 50 and 65, but over-85s are most active, providing 24 hours of voluntary care on a weekly basis.

Figures on voluntary care in the Netherlands are published in the National Health Monitor, the first joint publication by the Regional Health Authorities (GGDs), Statistics Netherlands (CBS) and the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM). Last year, approximately 400 thousand people (aged 19 years and older) participated in a large-scale survey.

More female than male carers

More women than men are engaged in voluntary care (15 and 9 percent respectively). With 19 percent, most voluntary care providers are in the 50-65 age bracket. The weekly number of hours spent on voluntary care services tends to increase after retirement: people under the age of 65 average between 8 and 11 hours, 65 to 75-year-olds average 14 hours and over-85s no less than 24 hours.

Providing long-term, intensive care weighs heavily on 14 percent of voluntary carers, approximately 220 thousand persons in absolute figures. On average, voluntary carers who feel heavily burdened give more hours of care, i.e. 23 hours compared to 9 hours for those who do not feel heavily burdened.

Due to ageing of the population, the pressure on voluntary carers will increase rather than decrease in the years to come. After all, older people generally have more ailments and chronic diseases and will therefore need more care. Surveys show that 20 percent of 65 to 75-year-olds, for example, are less mobile or have visual and/or hearing impairments, versus 38 percent among 75 to 85-year-olds and 66 percent among over-85s. The proportion of people suffering from chronic diseases (e.g. rheumatism, heart condition) is also increasing with age. In the 19 to 30-year-old population, 39 percent have to cope with at least one chronic disease, versus 61 percent of people in the 50-55 age category and 86 percent of over-85s.