



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**2 October 2019**

**Embracing CarersTM launches Time Counts to give time to unpaid carers**

Embracing CarersTM, a global initiative led by Merck in collaboration with leading carer organisations around the world, is launching Time Counts to coincide with National Carers Week (13-19 October 2019) to encourage people to reach out to an unpaid carer they know.

Unpaid carers caring for their loved ones are the hidden pillar of our healthcare system. The replacement value of the unpaid care they provide totals $60.3 billion a year – over $1 billion per week1.

Embracing CarersTM Time Counts aims to increase awareness, discussion and action around the often-overlooked needs of these carers. There is no limit to the amount of time you can give, because time really does count.

Unpaid carers in rural and regional areas are in extra need of support too, as the tyranny of distance makes it hard for them to easily access services that could assist them in their caring role.

“There is no better way to support someone than to give them your time. With the Embracing CarersTM Time Counts initiative, Merck aims to support the caring role,” says Leah Goodman, Merck Healthcare Managing Director and General Manager for Australia/New Zealand.

“Taking time out is not something that unpaid carers get to do as often as they need or want to. Most of us take this for granted, but carers invariably put their loved one first and themselves last, to the detriment of their own health, wellbeing and finances,” says Ms Goodman.

As little as five minutes can make a difference to the life of a carer. Here are some suggestions of how you can help:

* **A five-minute connection to send someone an email or message to let them know you are thinking about them and are willing to talk and help if needed.**
* **A 15-minute connection for** a phone call to check in and make sure someone’s okay or to see if they need help scheduling an appointment.
* **A 30-minute connection to give the carer time to respond to texts or missed phone calls.**
* **A 60-minute connection for a social drop in for a cup of coffee/tea or to make a meal for the carer.**
* **A 120-minute connection to do a grocery shop, take a walk, or go to gym to help the carer with his/her mental and physical health.**
* **A half day connection to allow the carer time to run some errands or tidy up around the house.**
* **A one-day connection to catch up on well-needed sleep, some respite, or a reset.**

**How to get involved in Time Counts**

Connect with a carer in your life and ask how your time can best help and support them in their daily activities. You can join Time Counts by visiting [www.embracingcarers.com](http://www.embracingcarers.com) to record your time spent with a carer. The website will track the total minutes spent which will assist in raising awareness of carer needs and you will also have the opportunity to post your own personal story. Valuable resources to share with a carer in your life can also be accessed from the website.

It is also important to help others get involved. You can do this by sharing your contribution on social media using the #EmbracingCarers hashtag in your posts.

“Due to the nature of the caring role, the time of an unpaid carer is often not their own,” says Ara Cresswell, CEO of Carers Australia. “The contribution that carers make to the person they care for and to the community more broadly should be acknowledged and celebrated at every opportunity. It is only by this consistent awareness-raising that we can build a national consensus of the many issues faced by unpaid carers and how they must be adequately supported in their own right,” says Ms Cresswell.

For more information about Embracing CarersTM and Time Counts, visit [www.embracingcarers.com](http://www.embracingcarers.com).

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**About Embracing CarersTM -** <https://www.embracingcarers.com/en/home.html>

Launched in 2017, Embracing CarersTM is a global initiative led by Merck in collaboration with leading carer organisations around the world to increase awareness and discussion about the often-overlooked needs of carers.

The Embracing Carers™ global advisors include [Caregiver Action Network](http://caregiveraction.org/), [Carers Australia](http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/), [Carers Canada](http://www.carerscanada.ca/), [Carers UK](http://www.carersuk.org/), [Carers Worldwide](https://www.carersworldwide.org/), [Eurocarers](http://www.eurocarers.org/), [National Alliance for Caregiving](http://www.caregiving.org/), [International Alliance of Carer Organizations](http://www.internationalcarers.org/) (IACO) and [Shanghai Roots & Shoots, China](http://www.jgichina.org/en/rootsandshoots/index.aspx?PartNodeId=196).

**About Merck**

Merck, a leading science and technology company, operates across healthcare, life science and performance materials. Around 52,000 employees work to make a positive difference to millions of people’s lives every day by creating more joyful and sustainable ways to live. From advancing gene editing technologies and discovering unique ways to treat the most challenging diseases to enabling the intelligence of devices – the company is everywhere.

Scientific exploration and responsible entrepreneurship have been key to Merck’s technological and scientific advances. This is how Merck has thrived since its founding in 1668. The founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed company. Merck holds the global rights to the Merck name and brand. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the business sectors of Merck operate as EMD Serono in healthcare, MilliporeSigma in life science, and EMD Performance Materials.

**About the International Alliance of Carer Organizations (IACO)**

Incorporated in 2012, the International Alliance of Carer Organizations (IACO) is a global coalition of 15-member nations committed to building a global understanding and respect for the vital role of family carers. Recognised as an official NGO by the United Nations, IACO works to improve the quality of life and support the needs of carers, through international partnerships and advocacy that strengthens and honours the voice of carers. To learn more, visit [www.internationalcarers.org](http://www.internationalcarers.org).

 The economic value of informal care in Australia, Deloitte Access Economics, commissioned by Carers Australia, 2015. <https://www.carersaustralia.com.au/storage/access-economics-report3.pdf>