

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Alzheimer Society of Canada calls for “Canadian Alzheimer's disease and dementia partnership”
83 per cent of Canadians want a national dementia strategy

Toronto, ON - September 20, 2013 - On the eve of World Alzheimer's Day, the Alzheimer Society of Canada has called on the Federal Government to immediately establish a *Canadian Alzheimer's disease and dementia partnership* to lead and facilitate the development and implementation of a national dementia strategy. The Society made its call to action in a speech delivered by CEO Mimi Lowi-Young at the Economic Club of Canada.

"Dementia is a huge threat to our public health system and to our nation's productivity," says Lowi-Young. "By 2040, Canada will spend \$293 billion a year on this disease alone. We have the best minds and the best of intentions, yet what is missing is a fully coordinated response to curb costs and meet the crushing needs of families and those living with this profoundly life-altering and ultimately, fatal disease."

Modeled after the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and the Mental Health Commission of Canada, the Society is asking the Federal Government to bring together a partnership of dementia experts, government officials, health-care providers, researchers and Canadians impacted by the disease to establish and implement an integrated, comprehensive national strategic plan. The Society is recommending that this arms-length, not-for-profit organization be created and funded through the Public Health Agency of Canada, and that the Government provides several million dollars in its start-up phase, followed with a commitment of \$30 million annually, over five years. The mandate of the partnership would be to

- increase investment in research, foster collaboration and improve knowledge exchange and translation
- provide a surveillance system and evidence-based information on all aspects of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias to inform best practices
- enhance the competency and capacity of those delivering dementia care
- increase awareness about dementia risk factors, early diagnosis and timely interventions
- strengthen the integration and coordination of care and service delivery across the health-care continuum
- recognize family caregiver needs and develop supports that provide options and flexibility

As our population ages, Canadians will be at an increased risk of developing dementia or caring for someone with it. "Everyone owns this disease," says Lowi-Young. "The approach we're proposing has worked for cancer and mental health. It can work for dementia and ensure that we get the best return on investment and available resources. We're asking the private, public and voluntary sectors to rise to the challenge."

Dementia is an emerging and urgent global issue, with the number of people affected worldwide expected to rise to 115 million by 2050. Countries such as France, Australia, Denmark, the UK and the United States have already implemented strategies, but Canada trails behind.

"Canada has a real opportunity to position itself as a world leader in dementia. Ignoring the threat of this disease is not an option; addressing it is essential to our economic future," warns Lowi-Young.

In a recent Nanos survey, 83 per cent of Canadians reported they want a national dementia strategy.* Today, 747,000 Canadians are living with dementia, with this number projected to increase to 1.4 million by 2031. Age remains a primary risk factor, but the disease can also strike before the age of 65. Evidence also shows the disease can begin to develop decades before symptoms appear.

**For information on this survey question, visit www.alzheimer.ca.*

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About the Alzheimer Society of Canada

The Alzheimer Society is the leading nationwide health charity for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Active in communities across Canada, the Society offers help for today through our programs and services, and hope for tomorrow by funding research into the cause, prevention and a cure.

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