

Soci t  Alzheimer Society

Up to 50 per cent of Canadians with dementia wait too long for diagnosis

Early diagnosis keeps lives from unravelling says Alzheimer Society during Alzheimer Awareness Month

Toronto, ON, January 7, 2014 – As many as 50 per cent of Canadians with dementia are not diagnosed early enough,¹ losing precious time when care and support can make a tremendous difference in their quality of life and avert unnecessary crises for their families. That's why during Alzheimer Awareness Month, the Alzheimer Society is launching a new campaign, ***Early diagnosis keeps your life from unravelling***, to promote the benefits of early diagnosis.

But fear and stigma continue to be huge barriers to seeking help. In a recent Nanos survey, 60 per cent of Canadians polled said it would be harder to disclose if they, or someone close to them, had Alzheimer's disease compared to other diseases because of the social stigma associated with mental health issues.

Earlier diagnosis opens the door to important information, resources and support through local Alzheimer Societies, which help people with dementia focus on their abilities to remain independent in their homes and communities longer. With early diagnosis, people can access medications that, although not effective for everyone, have the greatest impact when taken early. On a practical level, an early diagnosis gives someone the chance to explain the changes happening in their life to family and friends and allows families to plan ahead.

"Seventy-four per cent of Canadians know someone with dementia and more and more Canadians will continue to develop the disease. We want to make sure they're getting the help they need at every stage of the disease," says Mimi Lowi-Young, CEO, Alzheimer Society of Canada. "As devastating as the news can be, early diagnosis brings relief to families, gives them control over their situation and adds more years of living active and fulfilling lives."

Throughout January, Canadians are encouraged to visit the Alzheimer Society's campaign website, **earlydiagnosis.ca/diagnosticprecoce.ca**, to learn how to spot the signs of dementia, understand the benefits of a diagnosis and prepare for a doctor's visit. This year's awareness campaign is proudly supported by the KPMG Foundation.

About Alzheimer's disease

Today, 747,000 Canadians are living with Alzheimer's disease and dementia, with this number expected to increase to 1.4 million in less than 20 years. Although Canada's aging demographic will continue to fuel these numbers, increasingly people in their 40s and 50s are also being affected. Growing evidence also shows that brain changes resulting in dementia can begin 25 years before symptoms appear.

¹ Bradford, A. (2009). *Missed and delayed diagnosis of dementia in primary care: Prevalence and contributing factors. Alzheimer Disease and Associated Disorders. Retrieved from www.alzheimerjournal.com, October-December 2009.*

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About the Alzheimer Society

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**Make national dementia plan a priority
in Federal Budget says Alzheimer Society of Canada**

Society asks for \$3M in start-up funding

January 15, 2014, Toronto, ON – As Alzheimer Awareness Month continues throughout January, Mimi Lowi-Young, CEO, Alzheimer Society of Canada, will be asking the Honourable Alice Wong, Minister of State (Seniors), to make dementia a priority in the 2014 Federal Budget when she attends pre-budget hearings being held in Toronto today.

On behalf of the 747,000 Canadians living with dementia, Lowi-Young will ask the Government to allocate \$3 million in start-up funding to create the Canadian Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Partnership. The Partnership would bring together thought-leaders, planners and advocates across the government, health, research, academia and industry sectors, as well as families impacted by dementia, to facilitate and develop a National Dementia Plan to

- increase investment in research
- enhance support for family caregivers
- increase dementia skills and training of health-care providers
- improve early diagnosis, treatment and prevention
- strengthen the integration of care and support

Last December health ministers from G8 countries, including Minister Rona Ambrose, agreed upon 12 declarations at the first-ever G8 Summit on Dementia in London, England. Chief among these: world government must start developing plans to tackle the spiralling human and economic costs of dementia.

"2013 was an incredible year for dementia," says Lowi-Young, who was invited by G8 president David Cameron to attend the historic conference. "It was gratifying to see our Government participate in this Summit, which is bringing dementia to a new international level. We were equally encouraged to see the Government renew its commitment to dementia research in the recent Federal Throne Speech, and we're pleased to be invited by Minister Wong to make our case."

Left unchecked, dementia will affect 1.4 million Canadians by 2031, with economic costs soaring to \$293 billion per year by 2040.

"No doubt we're living in tough economic times, but dementia is a long-standing issue we we've been lobbying for and which requires bold measures. Canada has excellent resources, skills and research capital. What we need now is a comprehensive plan to pull these elements together. Canadians with dementia deserve care and service that is cost-efficient, and effective and improves their quality of life. We can't afford to let this opportunity slip by."

To find out more the Alzheimer Society and the Canadian Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Partnership or about the Alzheimer Society, visit www.alzheimer.ca

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Alzheimer Society of Canada welcomes commitments to dementia research and caregiver support in Budget 2014

Toronto, ON (Tuesday, February 11, 2014) – The Alzheimer Society of Canada applauds the Government of Canada for committing in Budget 2014 to advance research aimed at renewing investments in health research to tackle the growing onset of dementia and related illnesses, and to recognize and provide better support for family caregivers.

Today's budget will provide \$15 million per year to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research for the expansion of the Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research, the creation of the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging and other health research priorities.

This increased investment in the Canadian Institutes of Health Research will foster patient-focused research to address Alzheimer's disease and other dementia-related illnesses.

The funding is but one critical step to help Canada in the fight against dementia and to bring our country into a leadership position on knowledge, prevention and treatment of this debilitating disease.

"On behalf of the 747,000 Canadians living with dementia, we are grateful to the federal government for providing the resources needed to carry out important research to better understand how to tackle various forms of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease," said Lowi-Young.

The Alzheimer Society also applauds the announcement of the Canadian Employers for Caregivers Plan to help maximize caregivers' labour market participation. This plan will provide relief to family caregivers who already spend millions of unpaid hours per year looking after a family member with dementia. By 2040, family caregivers will be devoting 1.4 billion hours per year, representing \$11 billion in lost income and nearly 230,000 full-time jobs.

"These commitments will not only help improve the lives of Canadians affected by dementia but are also aligned with our call for a National Dementia Plan for Canada," says Lowi-Young.

The Alzheimer Society of Canada has been advocating for the creation of a Canadian Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Partnership. The partnership would assemble dementia experts, government officials, health-care providers, researchers and people who are personally impacted by the disease to facilitate and implement a national dementia plan.

Last December, health ministers from G8 countries, including Federal Health Minister Rona Ambrose and Alberta Health Minister Fred Horne, participated in a Dementia Summit and committed to work to address the growing problem of dementia through increased research, innovation and partnerships. Coming out of the Summit, Canada and France are working together to co-host a global legacy event on dementia, which will take place in September 2014 in Ottawa.

In addition, the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Finance, which includes members of all political parties, recently recommended that the government "move expeditiously" on developing a national dementia plan.

"We are encouraged by these opportunities to make important advances in the area of dementia," said Lowi-Young, who was honoured to participate in the G8 Summit on Dementia. "We are looking forward to working with government on follow-up initiatives coming out of the G8 Summit and on our common goal of reducing the toll of dementia."

The number of Canadians living with dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, will increase to 1.4 million by 2031. Annual costs to Canada's economy will rise dramatically from \$33 billion today, to \$293 billion by 2040.

About the Alzheimer Society of Canada

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To learn more about the Alzheimer Society and the Canadian Alzheimer's disease and dementia partnership, visit www.alzheimer.ca

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Alzheimer Society of Canada releases PC P.E.A.R.L.S.™

7 key elements to advance person-centred dementia care in long-term care

Toronto, ON, February 19, 2014 – Today, the Alzheimer Society of Canada is releasing new information to help promote person-centered care for people living with dementia in long-term care homes across Canada. PC P.E.A.R.L.S. are downloadable information sheets representing seven key elements that, when put into practice, help homes shift away from an institutional approach to a home-like model where staff, management, families and residents work together as a mutually supportive team.

PC P.E.A.R.L.S. include person and family engagement, care, processes, environment, activity and recreation, leadership and staffing and are based on research conducted in six homes: Delta View Life Enrichment Centres (British Columbia); Sherbrooke Community Centre (Saskatchewan); Fenelon Court and Union Villa Long-Term Care Home (Ontario); Donald Berman Maimonides Geriatric Centre (Quebec); and Northwood Care Halifax (Nova Scotia). The homes were selected using criteria developed by the Alzheimer Society, stakeholders from long-term care and experts in person-centred care. They are a representative sample of homes that are embracing culture change to provide individualized care to meet the evolving and complex needs of people with dementia and help them live to the best of their strengths and abilities.

“There is still no cure for Alzheimer’s disease and most people living with it will eventually need long-term care,” says Mary Schulz, Education Director at the Alzheimer Society who leads the Society’s culture change work. “But the good news is we can make their day-to-day life better, while supporting the staff who provide care and the families who put their faith and trust in the homes.”

PC P.E.A.R.L.S. describe each key element in detail with real-life examples that other long-term care homes can duplicate to make everything from physical spaces and recreational activities, to personal care and meal times more meaningful and engaging for people with dementia.

Most Canadians with dementia prefer to stay at home for as long as possible, but the reality is that 57 per cent of seniors living in a residential care home have a diagnosis of dementia,¹ and 70 per cent of all individuals diagnosed with dementia will die in a long-term care home.² With an aging population, the number of Canadians with dementia will reach 1.4 million in less than 20 years. Already, caring for a spouse, parent or friend takes an enormous toll on family caregivers who, by 2040, will be providing 1.4 billion unpaid hours per year.

“When we understand the lifelong values, wishes and personality of each individual with dementia, we can create an environment that supports and maintains their dignity and independence longer,” says Schulz.

The Alzheimer Society of Canada is working with government and industry leaders, researchers and clinical practitioners to make person-centred care the norm for people with dementia across all care settings. Long-term care homes and other health providers are invited to download PC P.E.A.R.L.S and learn more about culture change at www.alzheimer.ca/culturechange.

The Alzheimer Society of Canada thanks Extendicare Canada Inc. and Pfizer Canada Inc. for their unrestricted grants in support of its culture change work.

¹ Canadian Institute for Health Information, *Caring for Seniors with Alzheimer's Disease and Other Forms of Dementia*, August 2010.

² Mitchell S, et al.: *A national study of the location of death for older persons with dementia*. JAGS 2005, 53:299-305.

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Société Alzheimer Society

CANADA

March is National Brain Awareness Month Alzheimer Society of Canada asks: are you taking care of your brain?

Toronto, ON, March 6, 2014 - Have you been neglecting your New Year's resolutions like getting to the gym? National Brain Awareness Month is a perfect time to renew your resolutions because a healthy body is a healthy brain says the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

Scientific evidence shows that 30 minutes of moderate exercise each day, whether it's a brisk walk or taking dance lessons, helps lessen the risk of dementia. Get your friends and family involved. Do something everyone enjoys. Physical activity of any kind pumps blood and oxygen to the brain which is important for brain functioning. An active lifestyle also builds up your cognitive reserve, and improves memory and thinking.

But don't stop there. The Alzheimer Society recommends combining physical activity with a healthy diet for added protection against dementia. Consuming nutrient-rich foods such as whole grains, dark leafy greens and fresh-water fish supports good cardiovascular health. It's a well-known fact that heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure are contributing factors for vascular dementia.

Training your brain to learn new things in new ways also preserves brain cells and in some cases, can even help reverse some of the cognitive decline that occurs with age. Engaging in activities with others such as volunteering or participating in a book club is even better for keeping your brain in top form. Staying connected socially boosts mood and attitude, both important ingredients for well-being.

The Alzheimer Society also encourages Canadians to manage their stress, reduce or quit smoking and wear protective head gear whenever playing sports. Understanding dementia and knowing the warning signs should also be part of everyone's brain health plan.

Dementia is a term used to describe a group of diseases that cause a gradual decline in a person's ability to remember, think and perform day-to-day tasks. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form which affects 747,000 Canadians today. The risk of dementia doubles every five years after age 65 but the disease can strike people as young as 40. Evidence also shows that changes in the brain that lead to dementia can begin up to 25 years before symptoms appear.

That's even more reason to take charge of your brain health. It's never too late or too soon. The key is to make lifestyle changes that work for you. For practical tips and other resources, visit www.alzheimer.ca/brainhealth

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For immediate release

**Alzheimer Society of Canada asks Council of the Federation:
Make national dementia plan a priority**

Toronto, ON, August 25, 2014 – With the Council of Federation meeting August 26-30 in Charlottetown, the Alzheimer Society of Canada is calling on Canada's provincial and territorial premiers to make a national dementia plan a top priority.

During the 2013 Council of Federation meetings, all 13 premiers committed to address the urgent challenges of dementia and provide opportunities to improve early diagnosis and treatment. Premiers directed the Health Care Innovation Working Group to examine dementia-related issues, including identifying best practices for early diagnosis and raising awareness of the early signs and intervention.

"While we are encouraged by the provinces' commitment, we would like to see them go a step further by supporting a national dementia plan. A comprehensive, coordinated plan will not only provide better quality of care and treatment for Canadians impacted by Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, it would also strengthen the sustainability of Canada's economy and health-care system," says Mimi Lowi-Young, CEO, Alzheimer Society of Canada.

The Alzheimer Society is proposing the creation of a Canadian Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Partnership which would develop such a plan. Among other things, a national plan would accelerate research through investment, collaboration and innovation; standardize training and skills of health workers providing dementia care; ensure coordinated services throughout the dementia journey; enhance supports for family caregivers; and increase public awareness of the disease, its risk factors, early diagnosis and intervention.

The Partnership would be supported by the Federal government with representation from provincial governments and other key stakeholders, including Canadians with lived experience. Support from Canada's premiers is essential in developing the Partnership.

Dementia is one of the most complex chronic diseases facing Canada today. Alzheimer's disease and most forms of dementia remain incurable and without any effective means of treatment.

In less than 20 years, 1.4 million Canadians will be living with some form of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease. Fuelling this growth will be an aging population as the risk of dementia doubles every five years after age 65. Annual costs related to dementia will also rise, from \$33 billion today, to \$293 billion by 2040.

For more information about the Canadian Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Partnership or the Alzheimer Society of Canada, visit www.alzheimer.ca.

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C A N A D A

For immediate release

Alzheimer Society of Canada says Council of Federation on the right track but more action needed for dementia

August 29, 2014 – Toronto, Ontario – The Alzheimer Society of Canada is pleased that the Council of Federation continues to make early diagnosis and treatment of dementia a priority.

“Sharing and building on best practices that are already working well across the country means we can make a huge difference in the lives of Canadians affected by Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias,” says Mimi Lowi-Young, CEO, Alzheimer Society of Canada.

The Alzheimer Society is asking all levels of government to support a national dementia plan. It has recommended the creation of the Canadian Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia Partnership. The Partnership would bring together researchers, health professionals, provincial governments, industry, people with dementia and their families, as well as Alzheimer Societies across Canada, in order to plan and implement a national dementia plan.

“We need Canada’s premiers to get behind our Partnership and for the Federal government to provide leadership. Dementia is one of the biggest health challenges we’re facing as an aging population. Through better planning and use of our resources and expertise, we can build a health-care system that better meets the needs of Canadians with dementia and deliver services more cost-effectively,” says Lowi-Young.

A national dementia plan would primarily focus on improving research through collaboration and innovation. It would standardize the training of health workers who provide dementia care and ensure integration of services throughout the dementia journey. A national plan would also improve supports for family caregivers and increase public understanding of the disease.

Representing 747,000 Canadians already living with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias, the Alzheimer Society will continue to work with provincial and federal leaders to achieve a national dementia plan.

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Media Release

For Immediate Distribution

Alzheimer Society of Canada applauds agreement to create national dementia plan

TORONTO, Ont. (October 2, 2014) – The Alzheimer Society of Canada welcomes Health Minister Rona Ambrose’s announcement yesterday that she and her provincial and territorial counterparts have agreed to collaborate on a national plan to curb the staggering personal, societal and economic toll of Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias.

“This is excellent news,” said Mimi Lowi-Young, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of Canada. “Dementia is a huge threat to our public health system and to our nation’s productivity. It’s vital that we address it collectively in a coordinated way to make sure people living with this disease get the help they need and that our researchers can determine what causes it and can better understand how to treat it.”

The Alzheimer Society has been urging all levels of government to support the creation of a Canadian Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia Partnership. This organization’s mandate would be to lead, coordinate and facilitate a national partnership of researchers, health professionals, provincial governments, industry, people with dementia and their families, as well as Alzheimer Societies across Canada to help develop and implement an integrated, comprehensive national dementia plan in Canada.

This plan would increase investment in research, improve support for family caregivers, increase dementia training of health-care providers and raise public understanding of the risks and warning signs of dementia and the importance of brain health.

At a meeting of federal, provincial and territorial health ministers in Banff, Alberta, Minister Ambrose announced that she and her counterparts were at the “early stages” of an agreement on working together to forge a national dementia plan. She said health ministers from across the country in both levels of government committed to bring research and best practices together and present them at the next meeting of the health ministers.

Lowi-Young said the Alzheimer Society is encouraged by the spirit of cooperation and is looking forward to working with the health ministers over the coming months to ensure an integrated plan is put in place to ease the burden for hundreds of thousands of people living with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. “We are committed to help in any way possible to drive this dementia plan forward,” she said.

Currently, 747,000 Canadians are affected by dementia, including Alzheimer’s disease. This number will increase to 1.4 million in less than 20 years. Annual costs to Canada’s economy will rise dramatically from \$33 billion today, to \$293 billion by 2040.

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