

Canada Needs Bold Action to Head Off Impending Dementia Care Crisis

TORONTO, Sept. 6, 2022 /CNW/ - More than a million Canadians are forecast to be living with dementia by 2030, a date by which it is estimated that approximately 21 people will be diagnosed with dementia every hour. This forecast is expected to rise to 1.7 million Canadians living with dementia by 2050. These are some of the key findings of "Navigating the Path Forward for Dementia in Canada," the first volume of the new Landmark Study series, released today by the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

Today's report, authored by Dr. Joshua J. Armstrong, a scientist with the Alzheimer Society of Canada, represents the first significant update of Canada's dementia landscape since the Society released its "Rising Tide" report in 2010. The report is the first of three volumes of the Landmark Study, with volumes two and three to address issues such as the economic and social impact of dementia. These volumes will be released over the coming months.

"As the baby boomer generation continues to age, Canadians will face a number of challenges to ensure that people living with dementia continue to live their best possible lives," says Dr. Armstrong, "Our study, which created its projections using demographic data from Statistics Canada in a micro-simulation model, also demonstrates the power of risk reduction. With effective mitigation efforts on the parts of individuals, combined with increased supports from all levels of government, the potential exists to drastically reduce the number of Canadians who will develop dementia in the next three decades. This would have a positive impact on our health-care system and on the family members and care partners of people living with dementia."

Other highlights from the report include:

- The report outlines three scenarios in which the onset of dementia in Canadians is delayed by one, five or 10 years. A delay of one year alone could result in almost 500,000 fewer new diagnoses by 2050 – and if the onset of dementia could be delayed by 10 years, Canada could see 4 million fewer diagnoses of dementia by 2050.
- In 2020, there were 350,000 friends and family members of people living with dementia serving as care partners, averaging 26 hours of care per week. That is the equivalent of 235,000 full-time unpaid jobs and is valued at more than \$7.3 billion annually.
- If current trends continue, the number of hours of service provided by caregiving partners could reach almost 1.4 billion hours annually by 2050. That is equal to over 690,000 full-time jobs.

"While the figures in the report should sound alarm bells across the country, there is still hope that solutions can be found to support Canadians living with dementia and those caring for them," Kevin Noel, interim Chief Executive Officer of the Alzheimer Society of Canada says. "This is why the Society is committed to educating Canadians about the steps they can take to reduce their risk of dementia and encouraging governments at all levels to invest more in dementia research and support programs."

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Dr. Saskia Sivananthan, Chief Research & Knowledge, Translation and Exchange Officer with the Alzheimer Society of Canada, agrees: "The report should be seen as a wake-up call for Canadians. It lays out clear, actionable steps that the federal government, the health care system and all Canadians can and should take to change this trajectory with positive outcomes for all people living with dementia. Governments at all levels must commit to providing more resources to support programs, especially home care, to help people living with dementia in their own communities. Investing more in dementia research as aspired to in Canada's National Dementia Strategy is the only way we can truly change the outcomes of dementia."

A full copy of the report is available at alzheimer.ca/Landmark-Study.

About the Alzheimer Society

The Alzheimer Society is Canada's leading nationwide health charity for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Active in communities across Canada, the Society provides information, programs and services to those living with dementia and their caregivers. The Alzheimer Society Research Program is one of Canada's most innovative hubs for dementia research. Our funded research explores ways to develop a better understanding of the causes of dementia, improve diagnosis, treatment and care, and work towards finding a cure.

The Alzheimer Society of Canada has spokespersons available to speak to national media about today's report. Local media across the country are encouraged to contact the Alzheimer Society in their community for comment.

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