

Alzheimer Society
ONTARIO

Build Back Better

Pre-Budget Submission
February 2021

2021

Summary of Recommendations

Right Care, Right Time, Right Place

1. Commit to a home- and community-centric system of care for Ontarians living with dementia, supporting everyone in their desire to live at home as long as possible.
2. Create a dedicated funding stream for dementia-specific respite services, including a targeted stream to improve access where demand for services surpasses availability.
3. Support an additional 5,000 people living with dementia and their care partners through First Link® System Navigation with an annual investment of \$1.55 million.

Highlighting Excellence in our Healthcare Heroes

1. Establish a framework for province-wide registration and governance of personal support workers and a minimum standard of training for entry into the profession.
 - Prioritise dementia-specific skills and knowledge, including U-First!® training for healthcare professionals.

Standing Behind Ontario's Health Charities

1. Maintain MSAA and partnership funding agreements at or above 2019/2020 levels.
2. Make the provincial portion of the Charitable Donation Tax Credit refundable, the same incentive offered for political contributions.

Caring for Care Partners

1. Respond to the number one need expressed by care partners and implement a new, refundable provincial Primary Caregiver Tax Credit, meeting or exceeding the standard set by Manitoba.
2. Remove barriers to self-directed care funding for people living with dementia by expanding program eligibility to include care partners and/or substitute decision makers.

About the Alzheimer Society

The Alzheimer Society is a Federation of 29 health service providers, operating in communities across Ontario. We support over 85,000 care partners and people living with dementia each year, providing education, respite, counselling, social recreation, and many other community support services.

Eight recommendations for Budget 2021 to support Ontarians living with dementia, and those who care for them.

In Ontario, dementia is long-term care. Dementia is hallway medicine. Seniors living with dementia account for half of all ALC days in Canadian hospitals, and two-thirds of long-term care residents in Ontario live with dementia. Nearly a quarter of LTC residents could be supported at home, and one out of every six hospital beds in Ontario is occupied by someone waiting for transfer to a more appropriate care setting. The facts illustrate a longstanding truth about Ontario's healthcare system: clients, especially those living with dementia, are being cared for inefficiently. Too many people are in LTC and hospital beds not because they need that level of intensive care, but because they have no where else to go.

The overwhelming majority of Ontario's seniors want to live and receive care in their own home, yet just 60% of Ontarians with dementia are living in the community today. Home and community care providers, including the Alzheimer Society, are lean and efficient—and ready to do more. A story we hear far too often is this: a client waits for four, five, six months for in-home respite support. During this unacceptably long wait, a crisis situation develops and the person living with dementia is admitted to hospital. Unable to safely return home, the person remains in hospital as an ALC patient and is placed on yet another waiting list for an LTC bed. After three weeks in hospital, the client is moved to LTC, where they receive intensive 24/7 care—despite only needing a few extra hours of in-home support each week to enable them to live safely at home.

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This is illustrative of the reality of dementia care in Ontario today. The Alzheimer Society urges adoption of our eight recommendations in the 2021 provincial budget, and is a willing partner in providing more compassionate, efficient care to the 250,000 Ontarians living with dementia and their care partners.

50%

OF ALC DAYS IN CANADA ARE ATTRIBUTED TO SENIORS LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

23%

OF LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENTS IN ONTARIO COULD BE SUPPORTED AT HOME

45%

OF CARE PARTNERS TO A SENIOR LIVING WITH DEMENTIA REPORT EXPERIENCING DISTRESS