

Ontario Voters Expect Action on Dementia Care

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Alzheimer Society of Ontario →

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New survey reveals 89% of voters want their government to do more to keep older Ontarians living at home—particularly those living with dementia

TORONTO, April 13, 2022 /CNW/ - New polling data* shows nearly one in three Ontario voters have a close family member living with dementia—and over half know someone concerned about their risk of developing dementia. Across party lines, Ontarians are looking to their elected officials to do more to support people living with dementia and their care partners.

Based on feedback from a panel of 21 dementia care experts including physicians, researchers, sector advocates, and individuals personally affected by dementia, the Alzheimer Society of Ontario released its *Roadmap Towards a Renewed Ontario Dementia Strategy* today. The Roadmap contains 56 policy and 21 funding recommendations: a ready-made, costed, actionable path towards a transformational dementia strategy, available for review at www.votedementia.ca.

Key recommendations include:

- **Create mandatory professional development for physicians** regarding neurology, dementia diagnosis, and emotion-focused care, bundled as comprehensive components of education, training, and professional development for physicians in Ontario.
- **Establish a clear Dementia Pathway** for use by healthcare professionals including a presumptive diagnosis, assessment of suitable pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical interventions, support through clinical and non-clinical services, and clear management guidelines.
- **Complement the current plan** of expanding long-term care homes and building long-term care beds by ensuring that the sector has sufficient health human resource capacity and well-trained staff to provide adequate care for older Ontarians, particularly dementia care and behavioural support.

The Alzheimer Society is calling on all parties to commit to a renewed Ontario Dementia Strategy as part of their health platforms, and will be asking Ontarians to **#VoteDementia** this election.

"Dementia is an issue that matters in every community across Ontario," said Cathy Barrick, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of Ontario. "It affects our family, friends, and neighbours—but is rarely talked about by our leaders. That needs to change this election."

Over 260,000 Ontarians live with dementia today, a number that is expected to double within the next 20 years. Of the 5,200 alternate level of care (ALC) beds in Ontario hospitals on a normal day, half—50%—are occupied by an older adult living with dementia. Across Ontario's long-term care homes, two-thirds of all residents live with dementia.

"When governments talk about hallway healthcare, long-term care capacity, and staffing shortages, what they're really talking about is a failure to care for people living with dementia," continued Ms. Barrick. "Dementia lies at the heart of capacity constraints in our hospitals and long-term care homes. We can't compassionately care for the number of people living with dementia today, and aren't prepared to support twice that number within a generation. It's time to start ringing alarm bells."

The Alzheimer Society's *Roadmap Towards a Renewed Ontario Dementia Strategy* is a comprehensive, costed, expert-informed resource for candidates and parties looking to alter the trajectory of dementia care in Ontario. Learn more and read the plan at www.votedementia.ca.

***About the Survey**

For the overall survey, conducted by Yorkville Strategies between February 23 and March 2, 2022, a sample of 1,301 Ontarians was interviewed through online panel sources. An oversample was conducted in the Greater Toronto Area, to provide more specific insights into this region. Weighting was applied by age, gender, and region to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe.

About the Alzheimer Society

The Alzheimer Society is a federation of 26 community support providers operating in every corner of Ontario. We supported over 100,000 clients last year, including both care partners and people living with dementia. We provide education and training to physicians and other health care professionals, as well as the general public. With hundreds of staff and thousands of volunteers, we seek to alleviate the personal and social consequences of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and promote research into a cure and disease-altering treatment.

For more information, visit www.alzheimerontario.org.

SOURCE Alzheimer Society of Ontario

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