



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 8, 2014

Meet “Master of Dementia” Dr. Howard Feldman this World Alzheimer’s Month

Vancouver, B.C. — During **September, World Alzheimer’s Month**, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. and renowned UBC professor and researcher Dr. Howard Feldman are working to help give British Columbians the tools they need to improve and maintain brain health. An estimated 44 million people worldwide – including more than 70,000 British Columbians – live with a form of dementia. Prevalence is expected to double in B.C. by 2030, but it is possible to reduce the risk.

“Research suggests that a significant proportion of dementia cases worldwide might be attributable to risk factors that we can influence through lifestyle,” says Maria Howard, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of B.C. “By focusing on mind, body and spirit we can make lifestyle changes that may reduce the risk of Alzheimer’s disease.”

“There is emerging evidence that the long-term risk of cognitive impairment and dementia can be modified through lifestyle and medical interventions,” says Dr. Feldman, who was profiled in *The Lancet*, a leading medical journal, as a “Master of Dementia” research and was recently recognized by Thomson Reuters for his contributions to the field.

“The treatment of midlife hypertension (high blood pressure) and aerobic exercise training have been demonstrated to show impressive benefits,” he notes.

Dr. Feldman adds that a heart-healthy diet and a brain-healthy diet share the same underlying principles, and is a lifestyle adjustment that can be successfully undertaken to support brain health at any stage of life. “The goal is to enter later life with a better developed, healthier brain.”

Brain fitness is also an important risk factor, and he reports that there is very encouraging data indicating that cognitive training is associated with better day-to-day functioning as well as better cognitive efficiency.

Learn more about how to be good to your brain today at: www.alzheimerbc.org/Healthy-Brain.aspx

BACKGROUNDER:

How physical activity helps.

Studies conducted over the past 40 years show that physical activity can slow the effect of aging on the mind as well as the body, helping people stay mentally sharp as they age. Exercise is a significant factor in reducing the risk of developing dementia, in part because it stimulates increased blood flow throughout the body, bringing more oxygen and glucose to the brain.

Choose a healthy diet and lifestyle.

Eat a varied diet rich in dark-coloured fruits and vegetables, including foods rich in anti-oxidants, such as blueberries and spinach; and omega 3 oils found in fish and canola oils. Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol consumption.

Challenge your brain by being a life-long learner.

Brain training really works, and its effects are long lasting. Researchers found that when people with an average age of 73 years received 10 brain-training lessons, they did much better on thinking tests and reasoning skills, as well as processing new information and memory. The results of this brain training lasted for up to three years.

Chess, cards, word or number puzzles, jigsaws, crosswords and memory games are also all great ways to stay mentally active.

Be socially active.

Staying connected socially helps you stay connected mentally. Many activities like hockey, dancing, chess, playing cards and Scrabble combine brain stimulus with socializing. These are good ways to interact with others and make friends. Studies have found that friends are even more valuable for good quality social connections than family members.

Protect your head.

Severe brain injuries increase the risk of Alzheimer's disease or other dementias. Reduce your risk by wearing helmets when taking part in sports like cycling, hockey, football and snowboarding.

Education.

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. provides support and information as people learn to cope with dementia. "Heads up: An Introduction to Brain Health" workshops take place regularly in communities throughout the province and via tele-workshop. Visit www.alzheimerbc/Dementia-Education.aspx to learn more.

Want to make a difference in the lives of people affected by dementia AND reduce your risk?

Anything for Alzheimer's is a way for creative, dedicated doers to get involved and make a difference in their community. People can plan their own fundraising event or turn an existing event or challenge into a fundraiser. We make it easy to do your thing and raise funds to support those who face dementia.

Whatever your interests, talents, age or fitness level, there is an *Anything for Alzheimer's* event out there for you! And if you are moving your body, challenging your mind, laughing or socializing with friends or colleagues, then you are also being good to your brain!

For more information about *Anything for Alzheimer's* visit <http://anythingforalzheimers.ca/> and register to do your thing today!

To volunteer with, fundraise for or become an advocate with the Alzheimer Society of B.C., visit www.alzheimerbc.org. The Society is here for B.C. to provide Help for Today... *Hope for Tomorrow...*®

-30-

Dr. Feldman and Society leaders are available for interview throughout September.

Campaign hashtag: #BeGoodtoYourBrain

About Dementia

Dementia is a term that describes a general group of brain disorders. Symptoms include the loss of memory, impaired judgment, and changes in behaviour and personality. Dementia is progressive, degenerative and eventually terminal. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, accounting for almost two-thirds of dementias in Canada today.

About the Alzheimer Society of B.C.

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. provides a provincial network of support and education for families impacted by dementia and people concerned about memory loss. Communities across the province count on the Society for support services, information and education programs, advocacy to improve dementia care in B.C., and to fund research to find the causes and cures. As part of a national federation, the Society is a leading health authority on the disease in Canada.

Media Contact

Paula Brill, Coordinator, Marketing & Communications, Alzheimer Society of B.C.

Phone: 604-742-4940 | Cell: 604-365-9269

E-mail: pbrill@alzheimerbc.org

Twitter: www.twitter.com/AlzheimerBCnews



ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF B.C.

#300 - 828 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 1E2

PHONE: 604-681-6530 FAX: 604-669-6907 TOLL FREE: 1-800-667-3742

WEBSITE: www.alzheimerbc.org E-MAIL: info@alzheimerbc.org

TWITTER: @AlzheimerBC FACEBOOK: AlzheimerBC YOUTUBE: AlzheimerBC

CHARITABLE REGISTRATION BN #11878 4891 RR0001