

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NEWS RELEASE**

Monday September 21, 2015

**Alzheimer Society of B.C. unveils Dementia-Friendly Communities Toolkit at UBCM Convention for World Alzheimer's Day**

**Vancouver, B.C.** – Today is World Alzheimer's Day and municipal planners from around the province will be participating in the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM)'s 2015 Convention at the Vancouver Convention Centre. As part of the Convention, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. will promote Dementia-Friendly Communities, an initiative that launched in 2014 and has so far earned B.C. the first Dementia-Friendly Legislature in Canada.

"The Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative is an important opportunity to reduce stigma, as well as social and physical barriers that have a real impact on the quality of life of the people in our communities who are living with dementia," says B.C. Health Minister Terry Lake.

Much like other municipalities in Metro Vancouver, New Westminster is experiencing an aging population and the estimated number of residents with dementia is expected to jump from 940 now to 1,830 by 2034. The question of planning for the needs of people with dementia is becoming more important, because ensuring that people with dementia have opportunities for involvement and social interaction is critical. Municipalities have a key role to play, particularly in making sure that civic infrastructure is responsive to the needs of people with dementia.

"People with dementia may face challenges when shopping, banking, using transportation or visiting the post office," says Maria Howard, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of B.C. "However, with information, compassion and community engagement, there's an opportunity to change this. UBCM is a great place to highlight the success and age- and dementia-friendly communities, exemplified by municipalities like New Westminster."

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. invites British Columbians to think about how they would like to be remembered, as part of World Alzheimer's Day. For more information about Dementia-Friendly Communities, visit [alzbc.org/dementia-friendly-communities](http://alzbc.org/dementia-friendly-communities).

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To sign up for a media pass for the Union of British Columbia Municipalities 2015 Convention, visit [http://www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/convention/2015\\_convention/media-room.html](http://www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/convention/2015_convention/media-room.html).

Photos are available. Interviews with Maria Howard, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of B.C. are possible between 9 a.m. and 9:45 a.m., and between 11 a.m. and noon. Interviews with the Alzheimer Society's Manager of Advocacy & Education are possible between 9 a.m. and noon.

To receive a copy of the *Dementia-Friendly Communities Municipal Toolkit*, please email [dementiafriendlybc@alzheimerbc.org](mailto:dementiafriendlybc@alzheimerbc.org).

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### **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 authority on the disease in Canada



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