

**For immediate release**

**ALZHEIMER SOCIETY PART OF GLOBAL ACTION AGAINST DEMENTIA  
COLLABORATION KEY TO BEATING THE DISEASE, STAMPING OUT STIGMA**

**Toronto, ON, March 16, 2015** – The Alzheimer Society of Canada is taking part in the First WHO Ministerial Conference on Global Action against Dementia in Geneva, March 16 and 17.

Health ministers, researchers, policy makers and people living with dementia from around the world are meeting to find collective ways of moving towards better prevention, care and treatment and reducing its mounting economic and social toll, which today already impacts over 44 million lives worldwide.

“This is a great opportunity for our international community to work together to turn the tide on dementia and make good on our actions,” says Mimi Lowi-Young, CEO Alzheimer Society of Canada. “The only way to beat this disease is by collaborating and integrating our resources and brain power and investing more money in research. We must not only change the course of the disease but our social attitudes so people with it are able to voice their concerns without fear or stigma and live as full citizens with dignity and autonomy.”

Canada is deeply affected by dementia where its prevalence is tied to an aging demographic. An estimated 1.4 million Canadians will have the disease in less than 20 years, taking \$33 billion out of Canada’s economy each year in lost productivity and medical costs. Left unchecked, costs will skyrocket to \$293 billion by 2040. On top of that, dementia will place increasing pressure on family members who provide care, often to the detriment of their finances and health.

“We desperately need a comprehensive and integrated approach in this country,” says Lowi-Young. “We need to bring research in line with the economic impact of dementia to accelerate better treatments and a cure, while building on care models that are already working.”

The Alzheimer Society has asked the Federal Government for a Canadian Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia Partnership, which would include people living with dementia and their caregivers. The partnership would identify areas of need and opportunities to bring a national dementia strategy to life, with clear measures and targets, including:

- Increasing research with better data sharing and collection
- Strengthening coordination and integration of care, from diagnosis through end of life
- Improving knowledge and skills of health-care providers
- Expanding supports for family caregivers
- Increasing awareness of dementia and brain health promotion

Recently, the Honourable Rona Ambrose, Federal Minister of Health, and her provincial and territorial counterparts agreed to develop a national dementia strategy.

“While the government’s commitment is commendable,” says Lowi-Young, “we need to turn political sentiment into government action.” “Dementia isn’t just about numbers. It’s about real people who demand to be heard in the kind of care and support they need to live full and active lives. We need to reassure them that we will deliver.”

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