



**Alzheimer Society acknowledges National Family Caregiver Day
Supporting caregivers yet another reason for a national dementia strategy**

April 7, 2015, Toronto, ON – On this National Family Caregiver Day, the Alzheimer Society of Canada joins the Canadian Caregiver Coalition to recognize the vital contributions of working caregivers, who represent 6.1 million Canadians juggling personal commitments, care duties and work responsibilities.

This juggling act is especially challenging for caregivers of family members with dementia and even more grueling for women who make up 70 percent of this group.

The progression of the disease, which lasts up to 20 years in some cases, eventually puts caregivers on 24/7 call, causing them to drain their personal savings, take unpaid leave, forego job opportunities or retire sooner than planned.

In 2011 alone, caregivers provided the economic value of \$11 billion or about 230,000 full-time jobs. They also experience high levels of depression and other stress-related illnesses, further adding costs to the Canadian economy and health-care system.

“Dementia, on its own, is a strong economic case for flexible and innovative workplace arrangements,” says Mimi Lowi-Young, CEO at the Alzheimer Society of Canada. “National Family Caregiver Day is important for raising awareness of the need to better accommodate working caregivers, while initiatives like the Canadian Employers for Caregivers Plan shows our government is taking steps towards solutions.”

When caregivers are supported at work, they’re able to keep family members at home longer, helping to delay costlier options like long-term care or avoid crisis situations like hospitalization.

The Alzheimer Society has long called for a national dementia strategy that would provide employment flexibility, income protection and more community and home supports for caregivers. A national strategy would also offer improved integration of health and social care, faster and more informed diagnosis, greater public education of dementia and risk reduction and greater focus on research investment and innovation.

Last October, Federal Health Minister Rona Ambrose and her provincial and territorial counterparts committed to develop a national dementia strategy.

The Alzheimer Society has recommended that the government create a Canadian Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia Partnership to oversee the strategy by bringing together key stakeholders across the health, social, private, industry and research sectors, including Canadians with dementia, caregivers and provincial Alzheimer Societies.

“Maximizing our expertise and resources and identifying what’s working and where improvements are needed is the only way to guarantee the well-being of caregivers who need to work, and provide their family members the care and support they need to live as fully as possible,” says Lowi-Young.

A cure or effective prevention and treatments are yet to be found for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, which will affect 1.4 million Canadians in less than 20 years, almost a doubling of today's numbers.

For more information about the Alzheimer Society, visit www.alzheimer.ca or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/AlzSociety or Facebook at www.facebook.com/alzheimersociety.

About the Alzheimer Society

The Alzheimer Society is the leading nationwide health charity for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Active in communities across Canada, the Society offers help for today through our programs and services, and hope for tomorrow by funding research into the cause, prevention and a cure.

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