

Soci t  Alzheimer Society

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“Great Things Happening with Seniors!” says the Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick

There has been much controversy in the media as of late that has overshadowed the wonderful things that are happening, particularly with and for those who are at a higher risk of developing symptoms of dementia. The Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick, with Resource Centres in 5 NB cities staffed by youthful, vibrant and enthusiastic staff, interacts with hundreds of people each year across the province. The Alzheimer Society caters to all those impacted by dementia at all stages of the progression including persons with dementia, their caregivers, their adult children, or other family and friends. Some 15,000 residents in our province are now well into their Alzheimer’s journey with 3,500 new cases identified each year!

With the rapid increase in the absolute numbers of those diagnosed each year, and given the challenge that the diagnosis presents to families and those with the disease, the Alzheimer Society joins with other health organizations in urging a comprehensive Seniors Strategy; and we, specifically, would like to see a comprehensive Dementia Strategy developed for the province which would provide focus and direction for the issues that seem otherwise to lead to much negative publicity.

When people come to us they are in desperate need of hope so we work with them to get them connected with the services that will meet their needs and help them feel safe. And while we advance the goal of a comprehensive Dementia Strategy, NB is seeing some great changes:

- The annual Walk for Alzheimer’s was the most successful this year of any previous year, with \$171,000 in revenues!
- The First Link program, a tangible component of the NB Government’s Home First strategy, is well underway in its implementation across the province; this program, as in other provinces, is funded by the provincial government, and the Department of Social Development in particular;
- The Dementia Friends program is being introduced to NB to add even more support to those with this disease;
- The Alzheimer Society is blitzing the province with educational material helping people understand the seriousness of this family of dementia-related diseases and what can be done to assist those who are impacted;
- Music For Memories program, funded by a generous donor, will kick-off later in this year;

- The York Care Centre Day Program, in which the Alzheimer Society has been a planning partner, was approved by Minister Kathy Rogers following 5 years of discussion with multiple governments; this program will give support and respite care to persons with dementia and their caregivers;

In the current environment, there is need for unprecedented focus on the issues of seniors health; while most seniors age well, those who experience diseases associated with aging tend to require, along with their families, a good deal of support. Acute care hospitals are not the ideal place for them to receive this support, so resources will ultimately need to be shifted as the demographics continue to change. “Government has committed to the creation of a Seniors Health Council and we look forward to being part of the dialogue that is so very necessary” says Ken McGeorge, Interim Executive Director, Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick.

About the Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick:

The Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick has Resource Centres around the province, and runs numerous monthly Caregiver Support Networks for people with Alzheimer’s disease or a related dementia and their families. The Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick provides support and information through a toll free bilingual 1-800 line, and provides comprehensive information kits to help families navigate their way through a diagnosis or suspicion of Alzheimer’s disease. The Society provides in-office and telephone support, and organizes various fund development activities to help fund the national Alzheimer Society Research Program.

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