

Primary Care and Home Care Key Priorities for Ontarians

Alzheimer Society of Ontario urges Liberal Government to take action

TORONTO, Oct. 6, 2011 /CNW/ - The Alzheimer Society of Ontario congratulates Ontario's re-elected Liberal Government and urges them to make good on their healthcare commitments:

- redesign the primary care and home care system
- implement an eight-week caregiver leave
- shift more research investment into the prevention, treatment and cure of conditions such as Alzheimer's disease

"Fulfilling these commitments would significantly address the urgent challenges presented by Alzheimer's disease and dementia today," says the Society's Chief Public Policy and Programs Initiatives Officer David Harvey.

Informal polling by the Alzheimer Society reveals that Ontarians living with Alzheimer's disease and dementia and their caregivers want in-home care and respite support to be a top priority.

At present, 25 per cent of patients in Ontario hospitals who remain there too long have dementia. More and better trained family doctors, nurses and other primary care workers can help ease the strain on hospitals and increase the quality of life of those living with this disease.

"Keeping people with dementia in their homes longer is cost-effective and a more humane alternative to unnecessary hospital stays and helps delay more expensive long-term care placement," adds Harvey.

Family caregivers who provide the bulk of care for people with dementia will especially benefit from the Liberals' proposed eight-week caregiver leave. They are vital to building a robust home-care system.

Ontario will experience a 40 per cent growth in the disease in the next nine years. Almost a quarter of Ontario's population, or 4.2 million people, will be over the age of 65 by 2036. After 65, the risk for Alzheimer's doubles every five years.

Total spending on dementia will increase by more than \$770 million per year through 2020. Without reform, services will become increasingly unsustainable and more costly as the population ages.

The Alzheimer Society will continue to champion the healthcare needs of Ontario families dealing with dementia and looks forward to working with the Liberal Government to lead change.

About the Alzheimer Society

The Alzheimer Society of Ontario is the province's leading care and research charity committed to helping people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias by offering **Help for Today** through programs and services and **Hope for Tomorrow...®** by funding research to find the cause and the cure.

For further information:

Rosanne Meandro
Media Relations and Communications
416-847-8920
rmeandro@alzheimeront.org
www.championsfordementia.ca