

Making a Referral to First Link[®]



Working together to link individuals and families affected by Alzheimer's disease or other dementias to a community of support, learning, and services.

Alzheimer Society
SASKATCHEWAN
Learn More **Live Well**

First Link  Premier lien

Referring to First Link[®] opens the door for support.

What is First Link[®]?

First Link[®] is a program of the Alzheimer Society that connects people with dementia and their families to:

LEARNING - Our education programs offer information about diagnosis and progression, day-to-day living, positive approaches to care, strategies for managing challenges, and how to prepare for the future.

SERVICES - Alzheimer Society programs and services, and information about other community and health-care services.

SUPPORT - Support groups and opportunities for individual support, including proactive and planned contact at minimum every six months.

Why refer to First Link[®]?

- Research shows, on average, that those who are directly referred to the Alzheimer Society are found to have received support and services nine to eleven months earlier than those who self-initiated contact with the Alzheimer Society
- Information and support helps patients and families cope with more confidence
- There are community and health-care services that families may not know how to navigate
- With knowledge and skills, people are able to maintain quality of life while living with dementia and plan for the future

80% of our clients and care partners report they have better strategies for coping with dementia and managing symptoms related to dementia.



Who to refer to First Link[®]?

- Individuals with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or other dementias
- Individuals without a diagnosis (currently being assessed) and experiencing memory concerns
- Caregivers and family members



Who can make a referral?

- Physicians, geriatric specialists, memory clinics
- Health-care providers including: nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, pharmacists, and social service workers, amongst others, who work in family practice, healthcare facilities and community agency settings
- Community organizations working with individuals and families affected by dementia

When to refer?

- As soon as a diagnosis is made
- At any other time in the dementia journey (ie. Before a diagnosis / no diagnosis made)

How to refer?

1. Ask the individual or family member for consent to forward their name to First Link®
2. Complete a one-page referral form and return to the Alzheimer Society via fax: **1-866-746-1507** or email: firstlinkreferral@alzheimer.sk.ca

What happens when First Link® receives the referral?

Individuals or family members will receive:

- A phone call from an Alzheimer Society First Link® team member
- An information package specific to their needs
- Connection to Alzheimer Society Programs and Services
- Information about community and health-care services that may be helpful
- Ongoing planned follow up contact at minimum every 6 months

First Link® will send a confirmation to each referring provider once contact has been made. For more information and for referral packages, contact:

PROVINCIAL OFFICE

Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan

301-2550-12th Avenue

Regina, SK S4P 3X1

(306) 949-4141 or 1-800-263-3367

E-mail: firstlinkreferral@alzheimer.sk.ca

“We refer clients to the Alzheimer Society First Link Program as it is a valuable resource to our families and individuals with Alzheimer’s disease.

It provides them with additional support, a chance to connect with others, and education and specialized information regarding Alzheimer’s disease.”

- Brandi Loverin BSW, RSW - Assessor Coordinator - Home Care

Benefits of First Link® for Specialists, Physicians, and other Health-care Providers

By working together, health-care providers can focus on the medical aspects of dementia care and Alzheimer Society staff can provide ongoing support, education, and help in navigating the health-care system.

This partnership provides a holistic approach to care and may result in fewer unplanned visits to their physicians or medical facilities.

Benefits of First Link® for Patients

First Link® provides early access to information, services, and support and ongoing support throughout the continuum of dementia.

Early intervention provides an opportunity for people with dementia to have a voice in planning for their own care while they are still able to do so. Plus, care partners report that they are more knowledgeable about the progression of dementia and are more confident in their caregiving role, reducing the overall incidence and intensity of caregiving crisis situations.

Benefits of First Link® for the Health-Care System

Patients are connected to services at a local level for a more community-based, integrated continuum of care.

Research shows that families benefitting from early intervention through education, support, and counselling will delay placement in a long-term care setting, resulting in significant savings for the health-care system.

Contact us today!

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