

# Rising tide of dementia projected to cost Canadians \$872 billion over next 30 years

*Prevention, support and research can turn tide, reveals new Alzheimer Society report*

January 4, 2010 – A report released by the Alzheimer Society today to mark Alzheimer Awareness Month reveals alarming new statistics about the projected economic and social costs of dementia in Canada. *Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society*, says that, if nothing changes the prevalence of dementia will more than double in 30 years, with the costs increasing ten-fold.

“Today, someone in Canada develops dementia every five minutes. In 30 years, there will be one new case every two minutes,” says David Harvey, Principal Spokesperson for the *Rising Tide* project “If nothing changes, this sharp increase in the number of people living with dementia will mean that by 2038, the total costs associated with dementia will reach \$153 billion<sup>1</sup> a year. This amounts to a massive cumulative total of \$872 billion<sup>2</sup> over this 30-year period.”

Recognizing the urgent need to start turning the tide of dementia, the new report also outlines a series of potential interventions that could help minimize the impact of the disease. For example, one of the four proposed interventions looks at the benefits of delaying the onset of dementia in people by just two years, with a potential cost savings of \$219 billion<sup>2</sup> over the 30-year period.

“Hope lies in making changes today that will lessen dementia’s crippling effect on Canadian families, the health care system and the economy,” says Richard Nakoneczny, Chair of the Alzheimer Society of Canada. “More than ever, research is a critical contributor to this change. With an increased investment in research, we will learn more about prevention, possibly even discover a treatment to delay the onset of the disease and reduce its impact substantially.”

Other findings from *Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society* include:

- **Pressure on the health care system:** In 2008, more than 103,700 people developed dementia. By 2038, 257,800 new cases per year are expected.
- **Pressure on families:** The hours of care delivered by unpaid family members are expected to more than triple, increasing from 231 million hours in 2008, to 756 million hours by 2038.
- **Possible ways to alleviate pressure on families, the health care system and the economy:** *Rising Tide* proposes four hypothetical intervention scenarios, backed by current evidence that could become critical factors in reducing the impact of dementia. They include:
  - The benefits of physical activity on reducing the risk of developing dementia
  - The benefits of a combination of risk reduction strategies in delaying the onset of dementia by two years (a delay that could possibly also be achieved through the discovery of a new treatment);
  - The importance of supporting family caregivers who are struggling with the overwhelming emotional and financial hardships of providing care, as well as easing further pressure on the health care system
  - The importance of a “system navigator” to help families find the right services at the right time.

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<sup>1</sup> Future dollars

<sup>2</sup> 2008 dollars

# Media Release

“This report highlights the dramatic impact of dementia and related diseases on Canadian society,” says Dr. Rémi Quirion, Executive Director at the Canadian Institutes of Health Research’s (CIHR) International Collaborative Research Strategy for Alzheimer's Disease. “CIHR understands the crucial role of specialists, including researchers, specialized clinicians, and caregivers, and it supports efforts to improve and accelerate diagnostic and treatment capabilities.”

As the national voice for people affected by dementia, the Alzheimer Society is at the forefront of efforts to help turn the rising tide of dementia by:

- Leading the development of a National Dementia Strategy to be adopted by all levels of government, as well as working with the broader neurological community in its efforts to affect policy change.
- Educating Canadians about the importance of risk reduction, early diagnosis and looking after their brain health.
- Investing approximately \$2.4 million each year in critical dementia research.
- Providing support and education to people living with dementia, their caregivers and their families.

The 2010 Awareness Campaign was made possible in part through the generosity of the following sponsors: Pfizer Canada, Transcontinental Media, Medicine Shoppe Canada, Genworth Financial Canada, Lundbeck, Janssen-Ortho Inc., and Burnbrae Farms. The project *Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canada 2008-2038* was funded by Pfizer Canada, Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian Institutes of Health Research and Rx&D.

## **About Rising Tide**

*Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society* is a ground-breaking research study conducted by the Alzheimer Society in conjunction with RiskAnalytica, a leading firm in risk management. The data in *Rising Tide* were determined through RiskAnalytica’s specialized *Life at Risk*® evaluation framework, combined with the Alzheimer Society’s extensive network of leading researchers and clinicians. To download a copy of *Rising Tide* please visit [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca).

## **About Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias**

Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases that destroy vital brain cells. They are not a normal part of aging and are ultimately fatal. Alzheimer’s disease, the most common form of dementia, accounts for 63 per cent of all cases in Canada.

## **About the Alzheimer Society**

The Alzheimer Society is the leading, nationwide health organization for people affected by dementia in Canada. The Society is a principal funder of Alzheimer research and training, provides enhanced care and support to people with the disease, their families and their caregivers, and is a prominent voice within all levels of government. Active in more than 140 communities across Canada, the Society is also a key player in Alzheimer’s Disease International, an organization at the forefront of world wide efforts to fight dementia.

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