



**For Immediate Release**

**Taking Care of Caregivers: More After- Hours Support for Dementia Caregivers**

***“Caring for someone with dementia is a 24-hour a day job”  
say the Alzheimer Society of Ontario and the Ontario Dementia Network***

**Toronto, ON, October 8, 2013** – The Alzheimer Society of Ontario and the Ontario Dementia Network are working with Telehealth Ontario to help family caregivers prevent crises when regular services are closed. Funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Telehealth Ontario resources have been reviewed and strengthened specifically to support family caregivers of persons with dementia. These services will help to provide better care to people with dementia being cared for in their home by caregivers. Telehealth Ontario will connect people from across the province with specifically trained nurses to offer dementia support, advice and referrals 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

“Family caregivers deliver the vast majority of care for the 200,000 persons with dementia in Ontario in their own homes,” says Kathy Wright, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of Ottawa and Renfrew County and a Co-Chair of the Ontario Dementia Network. “With agitation, confusion and wandering often occurring in the early evening, Telehealth Ontario’s after-hours support is a vital tool for caregivers managing stressful situations when organizations like the Alzheimer Societies are closed.”

“Individuals with dementia are twice as likely to visit emergency rooms and if admitted are much more likely to be stuck in hospital, blocking beds while awaiting long term care,” explains Dr. William B. Dalziel, Professor of Geriatric Medicine at the University of Ottawa and Co-Chair of the Ontario Dementia Network. “Telehealth Ontario adds to the resources so needed for individuals with dementia and their caregivers. Research shows that caregivers with education, counseling and the availability of Telehealth Ontario services could keep their loved ones with dementia at home 1.5 years longer.”

“We’re strengthening Telehealth Ontario services in order to provide more support to those caring for loved ones with dementia,” says Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. “By supporting family caregivers at home when they need additional help, we are helping to provide the right care, at the right time and in the right place.”

Caring for a person with dementia at home is a difficult task and can become overwhelming at times. “My personal ‘melt downs’ were often during long weekends when I did not have access to agencies. [...] some of my darkest memories are of those ‘after-hours’ needs,” shares a family caregiver.

Telehealth Ontario nurses will receive targeted training in dementia protocols to support the service. During regular business hours, callers will be referred to the local Alzheimer Society for help. Access to after-hours services for dementia caregivers is available by dialling Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 after regular business hours, and during weekends and statutory holidays.

“Telehealth Ontario is helping build a robust province-wide support system specifically targeting the information and support needs of the families and friends who are currently spending 100 million unpaid hours caring for Ontarians with dementia,” concludes Kathy Wright.

-30-

For more information, or to book an interview with the Alzheimer Society of Ontario, the Ontario Dementia Network or Telehealth Ontario, please contact:

Pascale Guillotte  
Director, Marketing and Communications  
Alzheimer Society of Ontario  
416 847-8922  
[pguillotte@alzheimeront.org](mailto:pguillotte@alzheimeront.org)  
[www.alzheimerontario.ca](http://www.alzheimerontario.ca)

#### About the Alzheimer Society of Ontario

The Alzheimer Society of Ontario and its network of local Societies across the province offer **Help for Today** through programs and services for people living with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias and **Hope for Tomorrow...** by funding research to find the cause and the cure.

[www.alzheimerontario.ca](http://www.alzheimerontario.ca)

#### About the Ontario Dementia Network

Established in 2009, the Ontario Dementia Network’s mandate is to provide leadership to the regional dementia networks in Ontario in the development of a comprehensive and well developed system of service delivery, education, and public policy in the field of dementia.

<http://www.akeresourcecentre.org/DementiaNetworks>

#### About Telehealth Ontario

Telehealth Ontario is a free, confidential telephone service Ontarians can call to get health advice or general health information from a Registered Nurse.

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/telehealth/>