



For Immediate Release

Response: Improving Fire Safety in Retirement Homes and Care Facilities

Toronto, May 9, 2013 – The Alzheimer Society of Ontario is pleased to see the Ontario government implement mandatory requirements for the installation of automatic sprinkler systems in all retirement homes by Dec 31, 2018 and all long-term care homes by Dec 31, 2025.

With approximately 4,300 care facilities currently without sprinkler systems, Ontario will be the first province in Canada to require older care homes to retroactively install automatic sprinklers.

David Harvey, Chief Public Policy and Program Initiatives Officer at the Alzheimer Society of Ontario says, "Increasing numbers of residents in retirement and long-term care homes have dementia. These residents are more vulnerable in the event of a fire. It is important that we increase safety measures to ensure they are protected during an emergency."

There have been four coroners' inquests into fires at care facilities across Ontario between 1995 and 2012. All have recommended that retroactive installation of sprinklers be made mandatory for older care facilities. Graham Webb, Staff Litigation Lawyer with the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, provided representation for the Alzheimer Society of Ontario at the Coroner's inquest into the deaths of eight residents in a fire at Meadowcroft Place Retirement Home in Mississauga in 1995. In a response to today's announcement Mr. Webb says, "While these changes are long overdue, I am pleased at the government's commitment today to put these critical life safety measures in effect."

The Alzheimer Society of Ontario is pleased to be part of a process ensuring the safety of residents with dementia. As Mr. Harvey states, "We are proud of our ability to advocate and make a difference for people with dementia in care facilities across the province."

About the Alzheimer Society of Ontario

The Alzheimer Society of Ontario is the province's leading health charity committed to helping people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. With a network of 37 Societies across Ontario, we offer **Help for Today** through our programs and services for people living with dementia and **Hope for Tomorrow...**® by funding research to find the cause and the cure.

For more information:

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