

# FocusON dementia



*Our society now confronts a growing phenomenon – that of a burgeoning aging population of individuals living with frailty and/or multiple co-morbidities, all of which may be confounded by the challenges of dementia.*

*Dr. David Walker, Provincial ALC Lead, 2011*

Planning for dementia isn't just good social policy. It makes economic sense.

For the first time in Ontario's history, older people will outnumber younger people. The changing numbers will affect how health care is used in ways we have never seen before. And the increasing prevalence of dementia will influence every aspect of that system.

We need careful focus on the impact of these changing demographics on health-care resources. Most older people age well, but those aging with dementia require special concentration.

The Alzheimer Society of Ontario recommends five specific and concrete actions that build on government solutions already embedded into Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care and the 2012 Budget. Compassionate care combined with a clear direction equals health-care value that is patient-focused and cost-effective.

**Dementia is a core issue  
impacting Ontario's health  
and social system**



*"I have Alzheimer's  
but it doesn't have me"  
– Jim Finkbeiner*



*"I faced it. I have  
Alzheimer's disease"  
– Elizabeth Allen*

# Focus ON people

## One out of ten Ontario seniors has dementia

The number of Ontarians with dementia is growing dramatically, surpassing 200,000 by 2013 and by 2020 increasing to nearly 250,000.

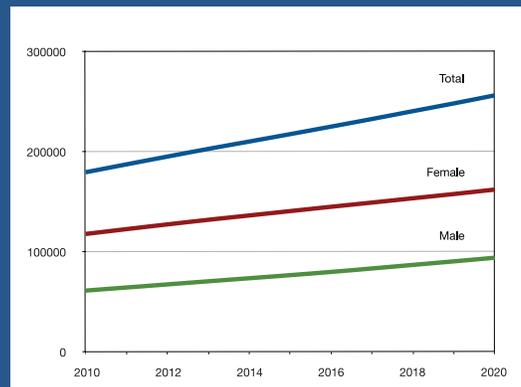
## Demands on unpaid caregivers are relentless

For each person with dementia, an estimated one to three people - most often spouses or adult children and in-laws - are providing care.

Ontarians caring for people with dementia will devote an estimated 100 million unpaid caregiving hours in 2012. This number will grow to more than 140 million hours by 2020. As the disease progresses, the demands on caregivers increase significantly.

However, high-needs seniors receive only a few more hours of home care per week than those

### Dementia prevalence in Ontario (65+)



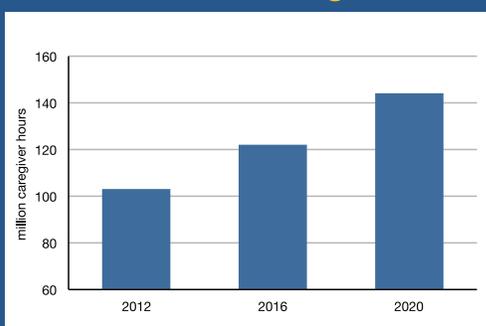
with moderate needs. In some cases, they actually receive fewer care hours.

### Evidence shows that people caring for someone with dementia:

- Provide 75% more care than other caregivers
- Experience higher levels of stress
- Report feelings of distress, anger or depression, or inability to continue care.

*"I was too young to understand that my grandfather didn't know who I was"*  
- Sarah Condie

### Annual informal caregiver hours



# Focus ON solutions



## **Solution:** Invest in *self-directed care*

The Seniors Strategy in Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care commits to three million more Personal Support Worker hours for people with dementia.

**We propose that the funding for these additional hours be given directly to families and individuals.**

## **Solution:** Improve access to primary care, diagnosis of cognitive impairment and support of the First Link® program across Ontario

The Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services (Drummond report) recommends that primary care be a focal point in a new, integrated health model.

Education and support for primary care professionals will increase the number of people who receive early and proper diagnosis, access to improved care and treatment and community supports for better aging at home.

**We propose investing in First Link across Ontario.** First Link is an Alzheimer Society program that helps physicians connect people with dementia and their families to supports and services in their own communities.

## **Solution:** Improve training for the dementia workforce

More than 100,000 health-care providers work with people with dementia, but few are specifically trained. **We propose specialized training for the dementia workforce to ensure improvements in the skills needed.**

## **Solution:** Focus Care Co-ordinators on high-risk seniors with dementia

The Seniors Strategy in Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care commits to investing in Care Co-ordinators who will work closely with health-care providers to ensure the right care is in place for seniors recovering after hospital stays to reduce costly readmissions.

**We propose that Care Coordinators focus on seniors with dementia,** who are at highest risk of hospitalization for preventable reasons, or unnecessary extended hospital stays.

## **Solution:** Promote brain health across the lifespan, including self-management for people with dementia

The Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services (Drummond report) recommends focusing on outreach to patients who need preventative care, particularly chronic disease and medication management. **We propose that this outreach focus on people with dementia.**

# Focus ON communities

**People with dementia are intense users of health-care resources**

People with dementia are:

- Four times more likely to receive diagnoses of frailty
- 30% more likely to have two or more coexisting chronic conditions
- Twice as likely to experience fall-related emergency department visits
- More than twice as likely to have alternate level of care days.

## Dementia prevalence by LHIN

LHIN Region	2012	2016	2020	% Increase 2012-2020
Erie St. Clair	10,640	11,960	13,260	25%
South West	16,020	18,050	20,170	26%
Waterloo Wellington	10,110	11,780	13,570	34%
Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant	25,090	28,300	31,460	25%
Central West	7,950	9,880	12,060	52%
Mississauga Halton	13,340	16,210	19,350	45%
Toronto Central	17,550	19,010	20,100	15%
Central	23,320	28,220	33,330	43%
Central East	24,590	28,590	32,740	33%
South East	9,000	10,290	11,600	29%
Champlain	18,360	21,000	23,950	30%
North Simcoe Muskoka	7,570	8,880	10,340	37%
North East	9,710	11,010	12,320	27%
North West	3,850	4,220	4,600	19%

## What is dementia?

Dementia refers to a group of brain disorders that causes a loss of brain function. Symptoms include loss of memory, mood and behavioural changes, confusion and impaired judgment. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, accounting for two thirds of dementia cases in Canada today. Most forms of dementia cannot be cured.

## About the Alzheimer Society of Ontario

The Alzheimer Society of Ontario (ASO) is the province's leading care and research charity focused on dementia of all types.

With a network of 38 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 visit [www.alzheimer.ca/on](http://www.alzheimer.ca/on)

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**Alzheimer Society**  
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