

For Immediate Release

Alzheimer's Awareness Month targets women with "The 72%" campaign Women doubly affected says Alzheimer Society

January 6, 2015, Regina, SK – Did you know that women represent 72 per cent of Canadians living with Alzheimer's disease¹? They could be your mothers, wives, sisters, grandmothers or friends – even you.

The Alzheimer Society is kicking off Alzheimer's Awareness Month with a nationwide campaign called *The 72%*. It aims to inform women in their 40's and older about the warning signs of Alzheimer's disease and how the Alzheimer Society can help.

Why women?

Women live longer than men and age is a significant risk factor. This is one reason why there are more women living with Alzheimer's disease than men.

Yet the impact on women is twofold. They also account for 70 per cent of family caregivers², which takes a tremendous toll on these women who eventually provide round-the-clock care. The burden is especially high for women raising families and holding down jobs.

"With this campaign, we want women to be aware of the impact dementia has on them," says Joanne Bracken, CEO, Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan. "Women lead busy, hectic lives, often paying the price with their own health and well-being. We're asking them to invest time in understanding the warning signs. Whether they're concerned about getting Alzheimer's, have just been diagnosed or are a caregiver, we want women to reach out to us."

Know the signs

Warning signs, often misunderstood or ignored, are critical in recognizing dementias like Alzheimer's. In absence of a cure, early diagnosis often allows available treatments and support to be more effective, so people can live as well as possible and start planning for their future needs.

"Before my diagnosis, I struggled at a couple of jobs, as I couldn't seem to retain new information. I was asking for instructions to be repeated and I misunderstood directions," says Roxanne Varey, who was diagnosed last year with early on-set Alzheimer's disease at age 51.

"I told my husband, who is a computer guy that I felt like my hard-drive was full. " Unsure of the warning signs, Roxanne visited her doctor – Alzheimer's wasn't even on her radar.

"Ultimately, we hope this campaign will help people recognize the warning signs when they begin and contact the Alzheimer Society, so we can help them to get a diagnosis and to provide the support throughout the disease," adds Bracken.

¹ Figure derived from data in the *Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society*, 2010.

² Figure derived from the Canadian Study of Health and Aging Working Group: Patterns of caring for people with dementia in Canada. *Can J Aging* 1994; Vol. 13 no 4: 470-487.

Starting January 6, the Alzheimer Society invites everyone, including women, to visit www.alzheimer.ca/sk/the72percent to take a moment and learn the warning signs and share them with friends and families on Facebook and Twitter. They can also read the stories of others living with Alzheimer's disease and post their own experiences.

Visitors will also be able to access other helpful resources about risk factors, getting a diagnosis, as well as caregiver tips and strategies. They will also be able to find their local Alzheimer Society Resource Centre.

About the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan

The Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan is the province's leading dementia care and research charity. We provide support and education to people with dementia as well as their families and caregivers through peer group, telephone and individual support. We fund Saskatchewan-based and Canada-wide research focused on discovering a cause, a cure and improving the quality of life for those currently living with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia.

For more information about the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan, please visit www.alzheimer.ca/sk.

-30-

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