



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION NO.: **421-00585**

BY: **MR. OLIPHANT (DON VALLEY WEST)**

DATE: **SEPTEMBER 22, 2016**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **HONOURABLE JANE PHILPOTT**

Response by the Minister of Health

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Health care services

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

The Government of Canada recognizes the significant and growing impact of dementia and is committed to improving our understanding of dementia, reducing the risks, and, improving the quality of life of Canadians living with dementia, their families and caregivers. These efforts have focused on surveillance, research, innovation, translating research findings into tangible products and services, working in partnerships, and engaging Canadians. Coupled with a continued focus on healthy living, these efforts are intended to reduce the impact of dementia on society and to support an aging population that is healthy and vibrant.

A Private Member's Bill on the topic of a national dementia strategy is currently under consideration, for which the Government has already indicated its support. Bill C-233, An Act respecting a national strategy for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, calls on the Government of Canada to develop and implement a comprehensive national strategy, in cooperation with the provinces and territories, to address all aspects of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Bill C-233 is to be studied in Committee. In addition to Bill C-233, the Chair of the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology has stated that the Committee will release its study on the issue of dementia in our society in mid-November of 2016.

In calling for the development and implementation of a national dementia strategy, Bill C-233 entails a number of complex activities that require close co-operation with the provinces and territories. Consistent with Bill C-233, the

federal government recognises that the significant public health challenge posed by dementia requires cooperation between all levels of government, as well as with other sectors.

Dementia is also a global issue. The Government of Canada is collaborating with international partners to address the associated health and economic challenges. At the G8 Dementia Summit in London, England in December 2013, Canada and the other G8 members endorsed a Declaration with the aspirational goal of finding a cure for dementia by 2025. This commitment was strengthened at the First WHO Ministerial Conference on Global Action Against Dementia in Geneva, Switzerland in March 2015. Canada was one of 80 countries to adopt a Call for Action to advance efforts on dementia and maintain it as a priority issue on national and international agendas. Canada is represented on the World Dementia Council, and is also supporting the call to develop a Draft Global Action Plan on the public health response to dementia, for consideration by the 70th World Health Assembly in 2017.

As such, the federal government will continue to seek out partnerships to improve health outcomes for Canadians affected by dementia and will work with Canada's exemplary researchers, neurological and health charities, the business sector, provinces and territories, and our international partners to support both prevention and management efforts.

The Government of Canada considers dementia as a priority and is committed to advancing this work in a manner that will be meaningful for the hundreds of thousands of Canadians affected by dementia. This is consistent with the concrete steps the federal government has already taken to address this pressing issue. Bill C-233 aligns closely with much of the actions the Government of Canada is already undertaking with our partners, at home and abroad, to improve our understanding of dementia, reduce the risks and improve the quality of life of those affected. These actions, coupled with a continued focus on healthy living, are intended to reduce the impact of dementia on society and to support an aging population that is healthy and vibrant.

Improving the quality of life of Canadians affected by dementia, as well as their caregivers and families, is an important focus of federal efforts in addressing this issue.

The federal government is working with the Alzheimer Society of Canada on a program called Dementia Friends Canada to help raise awareness and reduce the stigma of dementia. It is important for Canadians to understand what it is like to live with dementia and how we can help those affected. In June 2015, the digital engagement campaign (www.dementiafriends.ca) was launched by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), in collaboration with the Alzheimer Society of Canada, with an investment of more than \$2 million over two years.

The federal government is also working on finding new, or improving existing, technologies, products and services that could support caregivers and enhance quality of life for seniors and those living dementia. The Government of Canada supports Baycrest Health Sciences in Toronto to help establish the Canadian Centre for Aging and Brain Health Innovation. Through PHAC, the federal government is providing \$42 million over five years (2015-20) to support new research and the development, testing, and scale-up of products and services that will have a positive impact on aging Canadians, with a focus on those living with dementia. The Government of Canada is the largest of more than 40 partners from the public, business, academic and non-profit sectors, which will invest a total of \$123.5 million in the initiative.

Also, the AGE-WELL Networks Centres of Excellence in technology and aging harness accessible technologies to improve health outcomes and increase independence and quality of life for seniors, including Canadians living with dementia and their caregivers. This national research network is supported by the Government of Canada through the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) program run by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council with a total investment of \$36.6

million from 2014-19. Through the NCE program, the Government of Canada also supports the Canadian Frailty Network (CFN), which develops, evaluates and disseminates information about the use of various technologies in the care of seriously ill elderly patients. The CFN represents an overall commitment of \$23.9 million for 2012-17.

PHAC is also collaborating work with provinces and territories to establish ongoing surveillance of dementia and three other neurological conditions (epilepsy, MS, and Parkinson's) through the existing Canadian Chronic Disease Surveillance System. Annual reporting of data is expected to begin in 2017/18, which will help in assessing the health and economic impacts of dementia.

The federal government is implementing a Dementia Research Strategy through the CIHR. The CIHR Dementia Research Strategy guides research efforts on dementia in the areas of primary prevention, secondary prevention, and improving quality of life for those living with dementia and their caregivers. The Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging (CCNA) is the Canadian component of this Strategy which was launched in 2014 with current funding of \$32.1 million from the federal government and public and private sector partners. It is a research hub involving more than 350 Canadian researchers and 14 public and private partners from across Canada. With the funding provided to this group, on September 21, 2016, the CCNA launched the largest ever study of dementia in Canada: a two-year \$8.4 million study involving 30 sites across the country to identify risk factors for dementia and develop tools to permit early detection and treatment.

The international component of the CIHR Dementia Research Strategy began in 2009 and has invested over \$10 million between 2010-11 and 2014-15. Through these investments, CIHR has facilitated the participation of Canadian researchers in key international dementia partnerships with countries (e.g., US, UK, France, and China) as well as the European Union Joint Programme – Neurodegenerative Disease Research.

In addition, through CIHR, the Government of Canada and its private, non-governmental, voluntary and government partners have invested in the Cognitive Impairment in Aging Partnership. This is a consortium of private, non-governmental, voluntary and government organizations established to advance strategic research and knowledge translation on cognitive impairment and dementia.

The Canada Brain Research Fund also contributes to dementia research efforts. Established in 2010 by the Brain Canada Foundation, with federal support, this fund leverages matching funding from private donors and charitable contributions to support collaborative, multidisciplinary brain health and brain disorder research projects, including dementia. In 2016, the initial federal commitment of up to \$100 million over six years was extended by up to \$20 million over an additional three years.