



*Canada's first national dementia strategy
Delivering on a bold vision*

WRITTEN SUBMISSION FOR THE PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS
IN ADVANCE OF THE 2020 BUDGET

House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance

August 2, 2019

Recommendation:

That the Government of Canada increases its annual funding to support the implementation of the national dementia strategy from its current investment of \$50 million to \$150 million, over five years.

Alzheimer Society of Canada 2020 Pre-Budget Submission

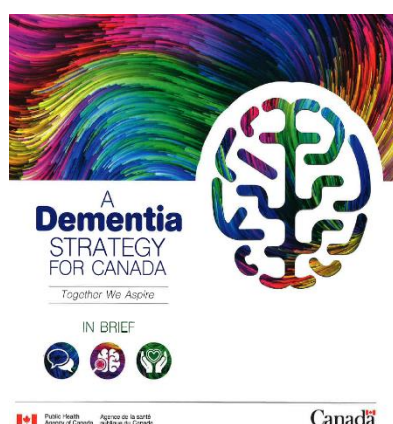
Background

Canada has taken significant steps to address dementia. On June 17, 2019, the Minister of Health, the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, launched **A Dementia Strategy for Canada: Together We Aspire**.

Canada now joins 31 other countries which currently have dementia strategies or plans in place. With the launch of the strategy, the Government of Canada will report to Parliament each year on its effectiveness.

Budget 2019 pledged an investment of \$50 million to implement the strategy: \$3 million in fiscal 2019 and \$12 million in each of the following four years. This funding is in addition to the \$20 million over five years announced in Budget 2018 for community-based projects to address the challenges of dementia.

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is investing \$31.6 million to support the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging (CCNA), a nationwide platform for collaborative research in dementia. Partners, including the Alzheimer Society of Canada, are providing additional funding of \$14.4 million, totalling \$46 million over five years to advance the science of dementia.



The Government's immediate investment of \$50 million over five years in the strategy is welcomed and provides a strong foundation upon which to build. However, this start-up funding is likely inadequate to meet the strategy's objectives in the longer term. To be successful, the national dementia strategy requires increased and sustainable funding. It is also critical that Canadians affected by dementia begin to see action on its implementation; otherwise, they will view the strategy simply as a piece of paper. The \$3 million allocated for the first year of operation could fall short of achieving this goal.

*"With this budget, we are investing \$50 million to support Canada's first National Dementia Strategy, to help give people living with dementia a better quality of life, and to ensure that their caregivers, **who are predominantly women**, get the help and support they need."*
- Minister of Finance, Bill Morneau

-Budget 2019

The burden of dementia

National dementia strategy, a step in the right direction,' but critics concerned it's underfunded.

The Hill Times April 29, 2019

Dementia has a significant and growing impact in Canada. Today, more than half a million Canadians are living with this debilitating and, ultimately, fatal condition. In less than 15 years, this number is expected to nearly double. Approximately 25,000 new cases of dementia are diagnosed each year. Dementia also takes a tremendous personal and financial toll on Canadian families who are often primary caregivers for people living with dementia.

Dementia is an expensive condition, costing the Canadian economy and the health-care system more than \$10.4 billion. By 2031, the estimated cost will be \$16.6 billion.

Women are disproportionately affected by dementia. They represent 65 percent of Canadians with this condition who are 65 and older and account for the majority of caregivers. According to a 2018 study in Manitoba, women make up approximately 75 percent of caregivers to someone living with dementia. This disparity impacts women's careers and mental health, with depression and exhaustion frequently reported. Dementia has significant economic and workplace consequences, both in lost earnings and employment opportunities.

With the launch of its first-ever national dementia strategy, Canada stands ready to usher in a new era of dementia research, awareness, care and support. This can only be realized, however, if sufficient funding is invested to ensure its effective implementation. The experience of other countries shows that strategies need dedicated, sustained public funding to be successful.

A fully-funded strategy

The Alzheimer Society of Canada recommends an investment of \$150 million over five years to realize a fully-funded, robust, national dementia strategy.

This recommendation is not new. In Budget 2019, the Alzheimer Society asked for \$30 million over five years for a total of \$150 million. This same recommendation was made in successive pre-budget submissions over the past three years to the Commons Standing Committee on Finance (FINA) and in briefs presented to the Department of Finance and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). Our

Alzheimer Society of Canada 2020 Pre-Budget Submission

proposed funding was supported by the Ministerial Advisory Board on Dementia, appointed by the Minister of Health, to provide evidence-based advice on matters related to the health of Canadians living with dementia.

The Society’s cost estimate for funding the strategy was also supported by the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology (SOCI) and by other stakeholders. In its November 2016 report, *Dementia in Canada, A National Strategy for Dementia-friendly Communities*, SOCI endorsed a fully-funded national dementia strategy by recommending “at least” \$150 million in federal funding over five years.

HEAL – Organizations for Health Action, a coalition of 41 national health-care associations and charities – has recommended that “the federal government focus on seniors’ care by investing \$150 million [...] to support the delivery of a national dementia strategy.” CARP, a national organization that advocates for older Canadians, has called for a fully-funded national dementia strategy. In a survey of their members, 76 per cent agreed the federal government should fully fund a national dementia strategy.

While the federal government has taken important first steps in its commitment to dementia research, public awareness and improved surveillance, \$3 million in fiscal 2019 and \$12 million in each of the following four years falls short of the projected \$30 million annually estimated to adequately resource the strategy.

Breakdown of costs associated with a fully-funded national dementia strategy

Strategic objective	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Dementia research \$40 million	\$5 million	\$5 million	\$10 million	\$10 million	\$10 million
Surveillance system \$15 million	\$5 million	\$5 million	\$5 million		
Public awareness \$25 million	\$5 million	\$5 million	\$5 million	\$5 million	\$5 million
Early detection \$15 million		\$5 million	\$5 million	\$5 million	
Dementia workforce \$5 million					\$5 million
Support for caregivers \$20 Million	\$5 million	\$5 million	\$5 million	\$5 million	
Best practices \$10 million	\$5 million				\$5 million
Quality of life \$20 Million	\$5 million	\$5 million		\$5 million	\$5 million

Similar pan-Canadian strategies such as the Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control have received substantially more funding. For example, the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, an independent organization funded by the federal government to accelerate action on cancer control, stewards the strategy and received funding for it’s second mandate, from 2012-17, totaling \$241 million. In March 2016, the

Alzheimer Society of Canada 2020 Pre-Budget Submission

federal confirmed announced ongoing funding for the Partnership at \$47.5 million per year..

International funding models

Countries that have dedicated substantial funding to the implementation of dementia plans and related activities as well as infrastructure include:

- Australia
- Chile
- Greece
- Indonesia
- The Netherlands
- Norway
- The United Kingdom
- The United States

All G7 countries have dedicated significant financial resources toward their national dementia strategies.

- The United States, for example, received \$156 million USD from the Obama administration (prior to 2017) for their strategy, of which \$130 million USD is devoted to research, with the remaining \$26 million USD for supporting people with dementia, families, and health-care providers.
- France has received a total of \$1.2 billion Euros of funding from their health insurance system and the National Fund for the Autonomy of Elderly and Disabled People, including \$200 million Euros for improving health care and another \$200 million Euros for research.

The Australian government has invested \$200 million AUD in that country's strategy, including \$50 million AUD to establish a National Institute for Dementia Research. European countries have supported national dementia strategies to the magnitude of \$105,000 Euros – for Ireland in the first year of their strategy and \$85 million Euros for The Netherlands.

Alignment with government priorities

Budget 2019 shows that the national dementia strategy will align with other priority areas of federal government policy:

- The strategy integrates a sex and gender lens,
- It's a key measure designed to assist persons with disabilities and health issues.
- It can help advance a seniors' agenda with a focus on women.

Alzheimer Society of Canada 2020 Pre-Budget Submission

Budget 2018 acknowledged the gender divide in dementia by highlighting “improving the quality of life of people with dementia and ensuring that caregivers have the support they need” as a key initiative to advancing Canada’s Gender Equality Goals.

Eighty-five per cent of people with dementia are supported, at least in part, by family members at home. Caregivers sacrifice their time, career advancement and mental health to provide round-the-clock care to a family member with dementia, often at great financial expense. According to a 2018 Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) study, informal caregivers spent, on average, 26 hours a week caring for someone with dementia—nine hours more than the average time spent caring for someone without dementia.

A fully-funded national dementia strategy will advance the federal government’s goal of supporting the care of Canadian families. To achieve this, the Society estimates the strategy will require \$20 million in new supports for caregivers to enable them to more fully contribute to the Canadian economy.

Conclusion

Canada has taken historic and positive steps towards improving dementia care and support with the launch of a national dementia strategy, and committed funding in Budget 2019. However, the strategy needs full and sustainable public funding to ensure its effective implementation. The initial investment of \$50 million over five years will likely be inadequate to deliver a strategy as the scale of dementia grows.

The Government of Canada was challenged to be bold and ambitious with this first national dementia strategy, but it will need to amplify its investment as the strategy moves into implementation. The Alzheimer Society of Canada has recommended an investment of \$150 million over five years. We look to the Government to maintain and increase its investment to fully implement the strategy’s vision and national objectives.

Dementia and a Low Carbon Economy

A 2017 study found that air pollution can increase the risk of dementia. “Living close to heavy traffic was associated with a higher incidence of dementia.” For Canadians living in cities, about 80% of the population are at a higher risk of air pollution and therefore, a higher risk of dementia.

-Living near major roads and the incidence of dementia, Parkinson’s disease, and multiple sclerosis: a population-based cohort study. Hong Chen et. Al. 2017.

“The amount of financial investment must match the magnitude of the strategy’s objectives.”

Dr. Paula Rochon, Vice-President, Research, Women’s College Hospital, The Globe and Mail, July 17, 2019

Alzheimer Society of Canada 2020 Pre-Budget Submission

Canada is racing against the clock. There is a growing sense of urgency for implementation of the national dementia strategy and for adequate funding to support it. Canadian families affected by dementia want their Government to take the next step and fully fund the national dementia strategy in Budget 2020.

About the Alzheimer Society

The Alzheimer Society is Canada's leading nationwide health charity for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Active in communities across Canada, the Society provides information, programs and services, influences policy to address the needs of people with dementia and caregivers, and raises funds for research to better understand the causes of dementia, improve treatment and care, and to find cures.

References and citations are available by request to the Alzheimer Society of Canada.