

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

National Dementia Care Assessment recommends priorities for a Canadian Dementia Strategy

OTTAWA, Jan. 16, 2019 – A Canadian Academy of Health Sciences expert panel on dementia released their report today outlining priorities for a national dementia strategy. Visit [CAHS](#) to download the Assessment.

The assessment entitled *Improving the Quality of Life and Care of Persons Living with Dementia and their Caregivers: CAHS National Dementia Care Assessment* was conducted by a six-member panel of distinguished multidisciplinary experts chaired by [Dr. Howard Bergman, MD, FCFP, FRCPC, FCAHS, Chair of the Department of Family Medicine at McGill University](#). The Public Health Agency of Canada charged the panel with providing an evidence-informed and authoritative assessment on the state of dementia knowledge to help advance and inform the development of a [National Dementia Strategy](#).

The Assessment found that the quality of life of persons living with dementia and their caregivers, along with access to health and social care, can be improved across all stages of dementia. Based on the best evidence and emerging best practices, the Assessment recommends that the development of a national strategy on dementia consider the following seven priorities:

1. Engaging persons living with dementia
2. Prevention, awareness and living well with dementia
3. Improving health and social care for persons living with dementia
4. Education and support for caregivers
5. Building and supporting the health and social care workforce
6. Creating and translating knowledge on dementia
7. Supporting research and innovation in all stages of dementia

The Assessment emphasizes the importance of a national strategy for ensuring the sustainability of Canada's health and social care system in face of the increasing number of people living with dementia. It highlights the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles that might prevent or delay dementia along with the need to overcome stigma and fear of living with dementia and how it is possible to live well with dementia.



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Improved quality and access to care for those living with dementia and improved supports to caregivers were stressed as well as the need to invest in dementia research and innovation across all areas of dementia - biomedical, clinical as well as research related to health systems, health services and population health.

The expert panel presents best practices on the implementation of dementia strategies, noting the importance of strong leadership, long-term commitment, standards of care and continuous improvement.

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“Canada’s aging population and the increasing prevalence of dementia poses a significant challenge for persons living with dementia, their families and caregivers,” says Dr. Howard Bergman, Chair of the CAHS Expert Panel and Chair of the Department of Family Medicine at McGill University. “We believe these findings will help shape a national dementia strategy aimed at better meeting the needs of people living with dementia and their caregivers.”

“The Government of Canada is committed to improving the lives of Canadians living with dementia as well as their family or friend caregivers. The National Dementia Care Assessment will be an important source of evidence in the development of a dementia strategy for Canada,” says the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health. “Thank you to the panel for its review and dedicated work.”

Selected dementia information and statistics:

- Dementia impacts women more than men. Of the over 400,000 people living with Dementia in Canada, over two-thirds (more than 265,000) are women. Studies suggest that about 90 percent of the dementia workforce is made up of women.
- Dementia has many faces and affects persons of every culture, ethnicity, religion, citizenship, sexual orientation and ability. However, certain populations face unique challenges. For example, the prevalence of dementia is 34 percent higher in Canada’s First Nations populations; it is increasing at faster rates and its onset is 10 years earlier compared to the general population.

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