

Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society *Alzheimer Awareness Month, January 2010*

Currently, there are 500,000 Canadians living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, a number that within a generation could reach more than one million people across the country. In short, our aging population is fueling a rising tide of dementia that threatens to overwhelm our health and social systems.

This January during Alzheimer Awareness Month, the Alzheimer Society will be releasing a pivotal study *Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society*. This study will, for the first time since 1991, provide new startling information on the growing economic impact of dementia in Canada. It will also outline a series of potential intervention strategies that could help reduce the number of people affected by dementia, if our governments were to invest in the right solutions.

"Alzheimer's disease and related dementias are a rising concern in this country, an epidemic that has the potential to cripple the Canadian health care system if changes are not made today," says Kathy Wright, Executive Director of the Alzheimer Society of Ottawa and Renfrew County. "The *Rising Tide* study is a call to action – both to our country's parliamentarians, as well as the general public - to put their minds to making change happen, while there is still time."

According to Statistics Canada, already, 4.3 million Canadians are aged 65 or older, meaning that one in seven of us is now a senior citizen. By 2015, the number of seniors is expected to reach 5.4 million. As age remains the number one risk factor for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, it has been long feared that the aging of our population was going to have direct consequences on the number of people living with these illnesses.

Rising Tide studies dementia in great depth, with a view to understanding the current demographic and epidemiological profile of the disease, along with the economic consequences over the next 30 years. Based on what we already know about dementia, for example how to reduce the risk and how to support people already living with it, this study also analyzes the possible effects of certain interventions, and how they could affect the health care and economic impacts of dementia in Canada.

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www.alzheimer-ottawa-rc.org

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Pembroke: 425 Cecelia St., Pembroke ON K8A 1S7 Tel: 613-732-1159

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OTTAWA AND RENFREW COUNTY

Measure of Hope

While *Rising Tide* will present some frightening statistics, we must remember that this only represents a future *where no change is made*. However, by investing in research and prevention, by educating and supporting our caregivers, and by raising awareness and ensuring that people are diagnosed early in the disease process, **we can make a difference**. But we can't do it alone. The voice of the Society is only as strong as the number of Canadians we have supporting our call for action.

“With the release of the *Rising Tide* study, we will have the evidence we need to ensure our call for change is heard by governments across the country,” says Wright. “At the same time, it is critical that Canadians continue to champion the fight against dementia, working in partnership with our governments and encouraging them to take action.” For more information on *Rising Tide*, please visit www.alzheimer.ca

About the Alzheimer Society of Ottawa and Renfrew County

The Alzheimer Society of Ottawa and Renfrew County exists to alleviate the personal and social consequences of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias and to promote research. It provides information, support and education to the 12,000 individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in Ottawa and Renfrew County as well as their families and caregivers. For more information, visit www.alzheimer-ottawa-rc.org or call 613-523-4004.

Local Alzheimer Awareness Month Event – 2010 Manulife Walk for Memories

Carleton University, Field House -- Sunday, January 31, 2010 from 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Ottawa's Premier Indoor Walk! Team registration at 9 a.m. and individual registration at 9.30 a.m.
For more information, contact the Alzheimer Society of Ottawa and Renfrew County at 613-523-4004 or www.alzheimer-ottawa-rc.org

2010
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For more information, contact:

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