

A new way of looking at the impact of dementia in Canada

The number of Canadians with cognitive impairment, including dementia, is rising sharply

According to a new study commissioned by the Alzheimer Society of Canada, the number of Canadians living with cognitive impairment, including dementia, now stands at **747,000** and will double to **1.4 million** by 2031. These figures comprise not only Canadians diagnosed with dementias, including Alzheimer's disease, but also those with cognitive impairment, which frequently leads to the more degenerative forms.

Canada's health-care system is ill-equipped to deal with the staggering costs

Today, the combined direct (medical) and indirect (lost earnings) costs of dementia total **\$33 billion per year**. By 2040, this figure will skyrocket to **\$293 billion per year**.

Pressures on family caregivers are mounting

In 2011, family caregivers spent **444 million unpaid hours per year** looking after someone with dementia, representing \$11 billion in lost income and 227,720 lost full-time equivalent employees in the work force. By 2040, they will be devoting a staggering **1.2 billion unpaid hours per year**.

Canada needs a dementia plan – now

The Alzheimer Society wants a national dementia plan to help reduce the burden of dementia and to support more people with the disease across Canada. Health-care providers, politicians, and policy makers need to focus on:

- Increasing funding for research into all aspects of dementia
- Promoting earlier diagnosis and intervention
- Strengthening the integration of primary, home and community care
- Enhancing skills and training of the dementia workforce
- Recognizing the needs and improving supports for caregivers

About the new study

The new study is based on analysis conducted for the Mental Health Commission of Canada in an effort to obtain prevalence and economic projections for selected mental disorders, including cognitive impairment. The prevalence data was derived from a health research study done in 2004 by the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy that determined the number of people treated by physicians for cognitive impairment, including dementia, in that province.

These prevalence rates were applied to Canadian population data to derive national prevalence figures which were, in turn, applied to the *Rising Tide* direct cost drivers to project economic impact. This research informed the development of the Mental Health Strategy for Canada released in May 2012. The Alzheimer Society commissioned RiskAnalytica to expand on the data to estimate indirect cost projections and costs associated with caregiving.