

Minister's Message for Alzheimer Awareness Month

Every year, as our population ages, an increasing number of seniors are diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. Alzheimer's disease is a progressive, degenerative disease of the brain that can seriously impair a person's ability to think and to remember.

Study Highlights

- 480,600 Canadians are living with dementia - this number could more than double to 1.13 million people by 2038.
- In Ontario, the number of individuals living with dementia could reach 395,540
- The number of new annual cases could triple to 98,620.

The Alzheimer Society of Canada recently released a new study - "Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society" - which reminds us that Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of the aging process. There are many things people can do to reduce their risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. The following measures can help keep your brain active and healthy:

- Challenge your brain by playing games like chess, keeping up old hobbies, or doing word and number puzzles
- Pursue new interests like playing a musical instrument, taking a course, or going to the theatre
- Be socially active by maintaining old friendships and making new ones, through work, volunteer activities, travel, or by keeping in touch with family and friends
- Maintain a healthy diet and get plenty of exercise
- Learn to manage and reduce stress through meditation, deep breathing, massage and physical exercise, techniques that lessen your body's internal stress response.

This month, local Alzheimer society chapters in 56 communities across the province will be hosting "Manulife Walk for Memories" to raise money that helps fund research and support for Ontarians living with dementia - and their families. To find a "Walk for Memories" in your community, please visit www.walkformemories.ca.

For the full report, *Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society*, please visit the Alzheimer Society of Canada website at www.alzheimer.ca

Yours truly,

Aileen Carroll

Minister Responsible for Seniors