



News Release

For Immediate Release

Government of Canada and Alzheimer Society of Canada launch *Dementia Friends Canada*

Campaign will help Canadians who are living with dementia

June 5, 2015

Edmonton, AB

Public Health Agency of Canada

The Honourable Rona Ambrose, Minister of Health, along with Mimi Lowi-Young, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of Canada, officially launched *Dementia Friends Canada* to support the growing number of Canadians living with dementia.

Dementia Friends Canada will engage Canadians in understanding what it means to live with dementia and how better to support those affected within the community. It will improve awareness and understanding about dementia, which is essential in overcoming stereotypes and reducing the stigma attached to the disease.

By registering as a Dementia Friend, Canadians are demonstrating their commitment to helping others who are living with this disease.

Through a website, video and social media, this national public engagement initiative will promote understanding, respect and dignity for those living with dementia, while helping Canadians become more aware of the small things they can do to help in their community. Simple actions such as being patient, speaking slowly and calmly, and asking short, simple questions, can help someone living with this disease to feel connected and supported.

Over the next two years, *Dementia Friends Canada* will focus on two complementary streams - workplaces and individuals - with the goal of engaging one million Canadians in a dialogue that will shed light on this disease. As part of today's launch, the Canadian Bankers Association and Credit Union Central of Canada have shown their support for the initiative, and workplaces of all sizes across the country are encouraged to visit the website and contact the Alzheimer Society so that they too may become involved.

Quick Facts

- *Dementia Friends Canada* is modelled after Dementia Supporters in Japan and Dementia Friends in the United Kingdom.
- The initiative has been adapted to the Canadian context and will be run by the Alzheimer Society with funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada.
- Through this initiative, Canadians will be encouraged to view a short, informative video and register as a Dementia Friend, committing to an action as part of the process. Three out of four Canadians know someone who is affected by dementia.
- While most people with dementia are over the age of 65, people in their 40s and 50s can also develop dementia.
- Since 2006, the Government of Canada has invested over \$220 million for research into Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.



- In 2014, the Government of Canada released Canada's National Dementia Research and Prevention Plan.
- Economic Action Plan 2015 proposes to provide up to \$42 million over five years, starting in 2015–16, to help establish the Canadian Centre for Aging and Brain Health Innovation.
- The Government of Canada is working with provincial and territorial governments on a pan-Canadian Dementia Strategy.

Quotes

“Our Government understands the tremendous impacts dementia has on those diagnosed with it, their families and their communities. *Dementia Friends Canada* will change the way we think, act and talk about dementia in this country. I encourage all Canadians to become a dementia friend and help make life better for Canadians affected by it.”

Rona Ambrose
Minister of Health

“The Alzheimer Society is thrilled to be a part of *Dementia Friends Canada* which will help raise awareness and improve the quality of life for Canadians who have this disease. People with dementia are people first and with our understanding and support, can still live well and be active in their communities.”

Mimi Lowi-Young
CEO, Alzheimer Society of Canada

“Helping Canadians experiencing dementia to feel valued and a part of their community is important – as is supporting their families through difficult times. As a proud supporter of *Dementia Friends Canada*, we encourage all Canadians to visit the website to learn more about the initiative. Community support has always been integral to credit unions – and this is a great example of such an initiative.”

Martha Durdin
President and CEO, Credit Union Central of Canada

“Dementia is affecting a growing number of Canadians and their families. By helping people recognize the signs of dementia and understand how to help someone living with this disease, we can all make a difference in their lives. The Canadian Bankers Association is pleased to support *Dementia Friends Canada* and we applaud the work of the Alzheimer Society and the federal government on this important initiative.”

Terry Campbell
President, Canadian Bankers Association

Associated Links

[Dementia Friends Canada](#)



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