

Why it's Important



Why is Alzheimer's disease and related dementias an important issue?

More than 61,000 British Columbians are estimated to have Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia – over 40,000 have Alzheimer's disease. In B.C. nearly 14,000 people will develop Alzheimer's disease and related dementias every year.

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. is focusing on two key issues:

- To include the three Health Canada-approved medications in PharmaCare's drug plan.
- To enhance the community care system so people with dementia get the best possible health care when they need it, in their own communities.

Medications are available that can ease symptoms and improve quality of life so that people with dementia can maintain their skills longer and delay institutionalization. Caregivers of people who take medication have less stress, their burden is reduced, and they can care for their family member at home for longer. Alzheimer's medications are included in the government drug plans in all provinces except British Columbia.

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. is promoting the enhancement of community support programs in B.C. to aid people with dementia, their families and caregivers, and health-care providers. The Society is calling on government to commit to a framework for dementia care.

Caring for people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias ought to be an essential component to health-care delivery for our aging population. Although the Society is pleased that the government has placed dementia within the Chronic Disease Management program, the government should develop a strategic approach to manage dementia.

Now is the time to get our points across to government.