

# Alzheimer Society

BRITISH COLUMBIA

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*Photo Caption: Margaret MacDiarmid, Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors to the Minister of Health, visits with constituents at the Alzheimer Society of B.C. provincial office in Vancouver during BC Seniors Week. (A high-resolution file is available for print upon request.)*

## **“Families First” includes seniors**

Vancouver, B.C. – Within one generation baby boomers will almost double the population of seniors in British Columbia. MLA Dr. Margaret MacDiarmid, Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors to the Minister of Health, was recently in the community spreading the message that Premier Christy Clark’s families first agenda includes seniors who are grandparents, parents, aunts, and uncles in B.C. families.

“It is imperative that all levels of government, as well as, agencies, community organizations, the business sector and individuals work together to support our seniors today and establish a framework for action to support our aging population,” said MLA Dr. Margaret MacDiarmid.

The aging population will result in a significant demographic shift that has implications for health care, but also critical caregiving provided by family members.

The impact of this pending reality is no more urgent than among families who are already on the dementia journey or are concerned about a family history of the disease.

As age is still the greatest known risk factor for Alzheimer's disease, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. is working with the Province to help turn the rising tide of dementia. The BC Ministry of Health provided the Society with funds to deliver the First Link<sup>®</sup> program in each of the health authorities across British Columbia, which connects newly diagnosed individuals and their families to the Society and includes proactive follow-up.

"We are already hearing from families in those communities what a positive impact First Link<sup>®</sup> has made to their experience on the dementia journey," said Jean Blake, CEO, Alzheimer Society of B.C. "It is our hope that anyone in British Columbia who needs information, education, and support on the dementia journey could benefit from a timely connection with us and our partnership with family physicians and health care professionals."

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