

Media Release

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A rising tide of dementia in B.C.

Projected healthcare costs to reach \$130.2 billion reveals new Alzheimer Society report

January 4, 2010 – A report released by the Alzheimer Society today to mark Alzheimer Awareness month reveals alarming new statistics about the projected economic and social costs of dementia in Canada. Here in British Columbia, findings from the national study indicate that if nothing changes over the next 30 years, the prevalence of dementia in the province will more than double from 2008 figures (almost 70,000) to an estimated 177,684 British Columbians living with the disease. The associated economic burden is projected over the next 30 years to reach a cumulative total of over \$130.2 billion.

“These findings are a reality check because the fact is that our baby boomer generation is aging and the incidence of dementia is increasing,” said Jean Blake, CEO for the Alzheimer Society of B.C. “The impact will be felt by everyone, not only the cost to the healthcare system but the economic and social costs to caregivers and families so we need to work together to turn the tide.”

The Rising Tide study is the final report of an Alzheimer Society initiative funded by Pfizer Canada, Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian Institutes of Health Research and Rx&D.

Other findings from *Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society* and *Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on British Columbia 2008 – 2038*:

In 2038, if nothing changes,

- 1,125,184 Canadians will be living with dementia, among them will be, 177,684 British Columbians
- The projected number of new cases of dementia for those in British Columbia aged 65 years and older is expected to reach over 35,770 (2.4 times the 2008 estimate)
- Approximately 61% of people with dementia in British Columbia will be female
- Family members in B.C. will be providing an estimated 118.7 million hours per year of unpaid care

“Today, someone in Canada develops dementia every five minutes. In 30 years, there will be one new case every two minutes,” says David Harvey, Principal Spokesperson for the *Rising Tide* project.

Recognizing the urgent need to start turning the tide of dementia, the goal of the project was to establish an evidence-based foundation upon which policymakers can build a comprehensive national plan. In addition, the new report also outlines a series of potential scenarios that could help minimize the impact of the disease. These intervention scenarios include physical activity programs to reduce the numbers of new and prevalent cases of dementia, prevention programs to delay the onset of dementia, informal caregiver support programs and system navigation to reduce the numbers of dementia patients residing in long-term care facilities.

Please visit www.alzheimerbc.org to read the executive summary of *Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on British Columbia 2008 – 2038*, as well as the national study, *Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society*.

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About Rising Tide

The Rising Tide project looks at the social and economic impact of dementia in Canada in 30 years if nothing is done now, as well as, the possible effects of intervention scenarios to help turn the tide of dementia. The national study also provides province-specific findings, and the Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on British Columbia 2008 – 2038 is the document that reflects that focus. To download a copy of the B.C. report, please visit www.alzheimerbcc.org

The national study was conducted in conjunction with RiskAnalytica, a leading firm in risk management. The data in Rising Tide was determined through RiskAnalytica's specialized *Life at Risk*[®] evaluation framework, combined with the Alzheimer Society's extensive network of leading researchers and clinicians. To download a copy of *Rising Tide* please visit www.alzheimer.ca

The 2010 Awareness Campaign was made possible in part through the generosity of the following sponsors: Pfizer Canada, Transcontinental Media, Medicine Shoppe Canada, Genworth Financial Canada, Lundbeck, Janssen-Ortho Inc., and Burnbrae Farms.

About the Alzheimer Society of B.C.

As the provincial source for support and education of Alzheimer's disease and related dementia and the voice for change in the delivery of dementia care in the province, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. provides support services, information and education, advocacy, and research funding for Help for Today. *Hope for Tomorrow...* To learn more about the Alzheimer Society of B.C., go to www.alzheimerbcc.org

