

---

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2010HSERV0049-001104  
Sept. 21, 2010

Ministry of Health Services  
Alzheimer Society of B.C.

### **B.C. COMMITS \$1 MILLION TO IMPROVE ALZHEIMER SUPPORTS**

VANCOUVER – The Alzheimer Society of B.C. is expanding three key programs to better support dementia patients and their families thanks to \$1 million in funding from the Province, Health Services Minister Kevin Falcon announced today on World Alzheimer’s Day.

“World Alzheimer’s Day provides us with the opportunity to raise awareness about Alzheimer’s disease and to recognize the continued need for support, education and research,” said Richmond East MLA Linda Reid who attended a World Alzheimer’s Day event at the Vancouver Art Gallery on behalf of Health Services Minister Kevin Falcon. “I am proud that we are helping to support the more than 70,000 British Columbians currently living with Alzheimer’s disease or a related dementia. These expanded programs will not only help more patients increase their knowledge and skills and maintain quality of life, but they will provide important care for the caregivers.”

The provincial funding will enable the society’s First Link, Minds in Motion and Shaping the Journey: Living with Dementia educational series to be expanded in Victoria, Nanaimo, Richmond, Burnaby, Kelowna and Prince George. While the programs are being delivered out of the Alzheimer Society of B.C. resource centres in these cities, they will be equipped to reach many more communities in the nearby regions.

“This announcement means that we are able to enhance the support we are providing to families on the dementia journey,” said Jean Blake, CEO, Alzheimer Society of B.C. “It means we’re able to proactively reach out to individuals who have recently been diagnosed with the disease, provide support sooner to them and their caregivers, and better prepare them for the journey ahead.”

The expansion of the programs helps to ensure British Columbians get the information, support, and education they need to strengthen their resilience for the long dementia journey and puts the province in a better position to respond to dementia patients.

First Link is a first-response strategy for people newly diagnosed with dementia and their families. By partnering with physicians and health professionals, who provide a formal referral as soon as possible after diagnosis, First Link proactively reaches out and connects families to Alzheimer Society of B.C. programs and services, and other community and health-care services.

Minds in Motion is a fitness and social program for people experiencing early-stage memory loss due to Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia and their care partners. The program promotes the concept of healthy living and the establishment of support networks early on the dementia journey.

The Shaping the Journey: living with dementia educational series is designed for people with early symptoms of dementia and their care partners to explore and prepare for the journey ahead in a positive and supportive environment. Families learn about the brain and the impact of dementia, planning ahead and practical strategies to live with increased confidence and well-being as the disease progresses.

The \$1 million in funding to the Alzheimer Society of B.C. allows for expansion of First Link within each of the five regional authorities in the fiscal year 2010-11.

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive and degenerative brain illness, which causes thinking and memory to become seriously impaired. It is the most common form of dementia. While Alzheimer's can develop in adults at a younger age, it occurs most commonly in people over 65. Alzheimer's is not a normal part of the aging process.

Every year on Sept. 21, communities and Alzheimer associations across the world gather to recognize World Alzheimer's Day.

The theme for World Alzheimer's Day 2010 is: Dementia. It's time for action!

The Province's commitment to helping those affected by dementia is long-standing. Since 2001, the Province has contributed almost \$39 million toward the Brain Research Centre's work in areas like multiple sclerosis, mental health and substance use, stroke, neurotrauma, vision and neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's. This includes contributions from the B.C. Knowledge Development Fund.

In addition, in 2006, B.C. provided \$15 million to the Pacific Alzheimer Research Foundation to help unravel the mystery of Alzheimer's and find a cure.

The Province is also investing more in home and community care, which provides important services for many people affected by dementia. This year, health authorities estimate they will spend \$724 million for home care and home support services for B.C.'s seniors – a 79-per cent increase in funding since 2001.

The funding provided to the Alzheimer Society of B.C., for First Link means that families affected by dementia will be able to more effectively navigate publicly funded health-care services.

For more information about Alzheimer's disease, support and education programs or how you can help, please visit [www.alzheimerbc.org](http://www.alzheimerbc.org) or contact the Alzheimer Society of B.C. at 604 681-6530 or toll-free at 1 800 667-3742.

-30-

A backgrounder follows.

Media            Bernadette Murphy  
Contacts:       Media Relations Manager  
                    Ministry of Health Services  
                    250 952-1887 (media line)

Ruby Ng  
Director, Marketing & Communications  
Alzheimer Society of B.C.  
604 742-4919  
604 828-9516 (cell)  
Email: [rng@alzheimerbc.org](mailto:rng@alzheimerbc.org)

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province's news feeds using RSS, visit the Province's website at [www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca).

## BACKGROUND

For Immediate Release  
2010HSERV0049-001104  
Sept. 21, 2010

Ministry of Health Services  
Alzheimer Society of B.C.

### **ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF B.C. RESOURCE CENTRES**

Alzheimer Society of B.C. resource centres that offer the First Link, Minds in Motion, and the Shaping the Journey: Living with Dementia educational series in their local and neighbouring communities can be reached in:

Victoria (serving Greater Victoria)  
202 – 306 Burnside Rd. West  
Phone: 250 382-2033

Nanaimo (serving North and Central Vancouver Island)  
200 – 1585 Bowen Rd.  
Phone: 250 734-4171 or 250 734-4170  
Toll free: 1 888 734-4171

Richmond (also serving South Delta)  
305 – 6411 Buswell St.  
Phone: 604 238-7393 or 604 238-7390

Burnaby (also serving New Westminster, and the Tri-Cities))  
103 – 5623 Imperial St.  
Phone: 604 298-0780 or 604 298-0782

Kelowna (also serving Salmon Arm and Vernon)  
865 Bernard Ave.  
Phone: 250 860-0305  
Toll free: 1 800 634-3399

Prince George (also serving Prince Rupert, Smithers and Terrace)  
202 – 575 Quebec St.  
Phone: 250 564-7533  
Toll free: 1 866 564-7533

-30-

Media  
Contacts: Bernadette Murphy  
Media Relations Manager  
Ministry of Health Services  
250 952-1887 (media line)

Ruby Ng  
Director, Marketing & Communications  
Alzheimer Society of B.C.  
604 742-4919  
604 828-9516 (cell)  
Email: rng@alzheimerbc.org