

Dementia: A Call to Action

Action 2: Support for Community Dwelling People with Dementia to Enable Them to Age in Place

This action addresses the need for people with dementia who are community dwelling and their family care partners to have greater support in order to age in place with the greatest possible physical, emotional and cognitive health.

What we know:

People with dementia and the family members who support them want the person they care for to live in their home and community of choice for as long as possible.

Providing care to a person with Alzheimer's disease or dementia is the fifth most common caring giving responsibility. Family caregivers make vast contributions to the care and support of the person with dementia through tasks inclusive of transportation, household work including meal preparation, coordinating appointments, managing finances, assisting with medical treatment and providing personal care.

- 32% of caregivers of people with dementia spend greater than 10 hours per week providing assistance.
- 55% of caregivers indicate that they are worried or anxious and 51% indicate that they are tired.¹

Family caregivers of people with dementia are more prone to developing depression and anxiety disorders, with female caregivers being at greatest risk.²

Family caregivers of people with dementia experience compassion fatigue as they find themselves constantly vigilant concerning the quality of care the person is receiving and due to the reality of coping with inconsistently delivered care due to inconsistent staffing.³

In order to meet the societal and personal goal of aging in place, people with dementia need services that are compassionate, skilled and accessible in their community. It is also vital to recognize the importance of assisting family care partners to remain healthy as they fulfill the demands of caregiving. Services provided must recognize and respond to the integrated needs of the person with dementia and their care partner(s.)

Recommended Responses:

- Design, promote and implement consistently across Manitoba options for Home Care delivery that allow for flexible implementation such that the program is enabled to meet the needs of people with dementia and their care partners.
- Set standards for mandatory Home Care in-service education that includes a requirement for annual updating about best practices in dementia care.
- Create longer stay respite options that are more reflective of home-like environments and that are able to engage the person in activities of daily living that are strengths based and cognitively stimulating.
- Increase the availability of Supportive Housing in communities throughout rural Manitoba.
- Increase the number of "rent geared to income" spaces in Supportive Housing throughout all areas of the province in order to increase accessibility to all Manitobans.
- Implement a caregiver assessment model that insures that the needs of the care partner are considered when developing the care plan for the person with dementia.

¹ Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2012

² Alzheimer Disease International, Dementia: A Public Health Priority, 2012

³ Beth Perry, Exploration of Factors Contributing to Compassion Fatigue in Family Caregivers Providing Care to Older-Adult Relatives, 2012