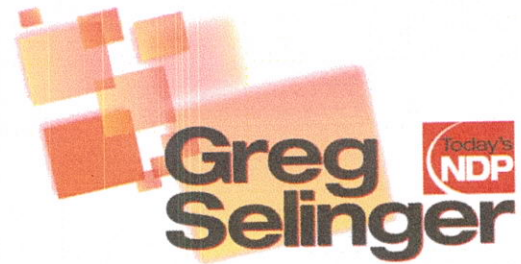


April 3, 2016

Wendy Schettler, CEO, Alzheimer Society of Manitoba
Don Dybka, Board President, Alzheimer Society of Manitoba



Dear Wendy and Don,

Thank you for reaching out to the NDP with your call to action. Dementia care is a priority for the NDP and we are committed to improving access to educational and support programs for caregivers, families and healthcare professionals. In 2014 the NDP government launched *Manitoba's Framework for Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias* - a renewed five-year strategy that has and will serve as a roadmap to guide Manitoba's health system planning and investment to improve care and support for Manitobans with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and their families. The Framework outlines recommendations in five key areas: raising awareness and understanding; early recognition, initial assessment and diagnosis; management, care and support; end-of-life care; and, research and evaluation. Many of the recommended responses in the ASM's call to action are found in The Framework and in *Advancing Continuing Care – A Blueprint to Support System Change*. The Blueprint is a five year plan for delivering care and services that improve the lives of Manitoba seniors and others with chronic illnesses and disabilities.

Action has been undertaken on a number of priority areas outlined in the framework including:

- continuing efforts to enhance access to primary care for all Manitobans to ensure timely assessment and diagnosis;
- taking steps to recruit and retain additional geriatricians, neurologists with an interest in dementia and geriatric psychiatrists to Manitoba;
- pursuing enhanced dementia and cognitive impairment education in health-care provider education programs;
- promoting family/caregiver involvement in care planning discussions and decisions;
- enhancing the delivery of dementia education for health-care providers along the continuum of care;
- reviewing personal care home standards related to requirements for dementia education. Standard 24 indicates that PCH staff must be given education on AD and related dementias.
- revising the personal care home Standards Review tool (January 2015). The current standards indicate the need for person-centered care in all PCHs;
- working with partners to develop a co-ordinated approach to dementia research in Manitoba.



Other improvements that enhance the care and support of Manitobans with dementia and their families and caregivers made in recent years include:

- proclaiming the Caregiver Recognition Act and development of caregiver resources and toolkits;
- increasing the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit to offset the caregiver's out-of-pocket expenses that are incurred looking after someone.
- creating hospital home teams to help seniors with complex health conditions stay healthier and avoid emergency department visits and hospital admissions;
- establishing PRIME (Program of Integrated Managed-care for the Elderly), an all-inclusive program with individualized supports for seniors with complex health issues that provides primary care, personal care, socialization, rehabilitation and respite services;
- enhancing community-living supports and housing options through the Aging in Place strategy;
- incorporating brain health into our healthy living and prevention campaigns.
- providing annual ongoing funding for First Link®, a referral program that links people with dementia and their families to Alzheimer's Society of Manitoba for support, information, and education.
- expanding geriatric mental health resources such as clinicians and outreach teams;
- implementing educational programs for personal care home staff caring for those with dementia;
- expanding Personal, Intellectual, Emotional, Capabilities, Environment, and Social (PIECES) training for staff who work in home and community settings to meet the requirements of individuals with increasingly complex physical and cognitive/mental health needs and associated behavioural issues
- increasing personal care home staffing hours to 3.6 hours per resident, per day; and
- putting in place a 10 year personal care home plan (PCH) which involves assessing current PCH infrastructure and future need, as well as beginning the process of reviewing the most recent PCH design guidelines.
- increasing the number of PCH beds, including beds for seniors with complex behavioural needs
- Building new social and affordable housing units for seniors.

The NDP will build on its efforts to invest in ensuring that quality support services will be available for Manitobans impacted by dementia. The Liberal's agenda of massive corporate giveaways to wealth banks and big businesses will mean cuts to front-line services like health care and seniors care. The last time Brian Pallister was in Cabinet, the devastating Conservative health care cuts led to the firing of 1,000 nurses and drove away 117 doctors. These cuts were a direct result of corporate consultants reviewing the health care system. Now Brian Pallister is calling for the same kind of reviews, which will hurt the services Manitobans rely on.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K. Bellamy", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Keith Bellamy
NDP Provincial Secretary