

***National Institute on Ageing Launches First of Three Dementia Reports
and New Public Education Campaign***

***First Report Highlights Urgent Need for Action to Improve Awareness, Reduce Risk and
Challenge Stigma***

TORONTO, Tuesday, September 23 — Just days after World Alzheimer’s Awareness Day (September 21), the National Institute on Ageing (NIA) is releasing a new report, [*Addressing Dementia in Canada: Current Trends, Challenges and Opportunities in Improving Public Awareness, Reducing the Risk and Challenging Stigma Related to Dementia*](#). This report underscores the urgent need for more coordinated, comprehensive strategies to tackle one of the country’s fastest-growing health challenges.

Already, **74% of Canadian adults** know someone who has or had dementia—highlighting its widespread impact. Approximately **500,000 older adults** were diagnosed in 2023/24, and close to **772,000 Canadians** may be living with dementia in 2025. With an ageing population, that number could reach **1.7 million by 2050**, alongside 1 million care partners.

The good news is that there are many things Canadians can do to reduce their risk and prevent or delay getting dementia.

The latest research shows that nearly half of dementia cases worldwide may be prevented or delayed by addressing modifiable risk factors, including lifestyle, health, and environmental influences. Yet awareness remains limited—**only a quarter of Canadians (26%) believe they can reduce their risk** of developing dementia to a high degree, up from 20% in 2022. Half think they can lower their risk to a moderate extent, while 16% believe they can do very little to reduce their risk.

To help close this gap, the NIA is launching [*Small Steps Big Difference*](#)—a new national public education campaign designed to empower Canadians with practical actions to protect brain health and challenge the persistent stigma surrounding dementia.

“Dementia is not an inevitable part of ageing. We know from the latest research that nearly half of dementia cases may be prevented or delayed by addressing modifiable risk factors. Canadians deserve clear, coordinated strategies to help them act on this

knowledge and build communities that are more inclusive and supportive of people living with dementia,” said Dr. Samir Sinha, Director of Health Policy Research at the NIA.

Supported by the Slight Family Foundation Dementia Initiative, the NIA’s campaign reminds Canadians that *dementia isn’t inevitable*—and the healthy choices we make today, such as staying socially connected, being physically active, managing blood pressure, high cholesterol, hearing and visual impairments are just some of the 14 actions that can be taken to help safeguard memory, thinking and people’s overall quality of life.

Report Findings

The NIA’s analysis finds that while nearly every Canadian province and territory recognizes dementia as a pressing issue, fewer than half have developed a dedicated dementia strategy in the past 15 years. Even where strategies exist, implementation is uneven, and key gaps remain in public awareness, prevention and stigma reduction.

The NIA’s inaugural dementia report calls for three evidence-informed policy actions:

1. **Develop and implement dementia strategies in every Canadian jurisdiction.**
2. **Continue and expand public awareness initiatives in every Canadian jurisdiction** to improve knowledge, reduce risk, and challenge stigma.
3. **Establish clear success metrics at all levels of government** and publicly report on progress.

Small Steps, Big Difference

The NIA’s **Small Steps Big Difference** campaign further provides Canadians with accessible, research-backed resources, including:

- **14 evidence-informed ways** to help prevent or delay dementia, such as staying socially connected, getting regular physical activity, managing high blood pressure and cholesterol, and correcting visual and hearing loss.
- Real stories from Canadians living with dementia and their care partners to help break stigma and inspire change.

- Practical tools, infographics and videos to encourage small, everyday actions that support brain health.

“This report and public education campaign reinforce the NIA’s commitment to evidence-informed solutions that improve the lives of older Canadians. By shining a light on existing government strategies, identifying gaps and providing practical resources, we hope to accelerate progress toward a future where fewer people develop dementia and where those affected can live with greater dignity and support,” said Mark Hazelden, Interim Executive Director of the NIA.

Small steps now can make a big difference later. It’s never too early—or too late—to take action. To learn more, explore resources and share, visit www.smallstepsbigdifference.ca.

About The National Institute on Ageing

The National Institute on Ageing (NIA) improves the lives of older adults and the systems that support them by convening stakeholders, conducting research, advancing policy solutions and practice innovations, sharing information and shifting attitudes. Our vision is a Canada where older adults feel valued, included, supported, and better prepared to age with confidence.

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