

What Should Dementia Care Look Like Moving Forward?

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Project Summary:

Over 400 Canadians experience the onset of dementia every day. As a nation, we are witnessing exponential growth of the cognitive disorder, with cases expected to almost double from 2025 to 1.7 million by 2050. Accordingly, the consequences on the healthcare system are vast, with caregivers at the core of this impact. With the appropriate steps, we can work towards mitigating these effects, effectively reducing the repercussions and caregiving time by 1 billion hours a year. However, the question remains: how?

Notably, the management of dementia is not one-size-fits-all, and a closer look at communities can help provide a more targeted plan for the province.

Project Goals:

- Develop a **strategic plan** for Ontario's response to the dementia crisis
- Ensure plan is **informed** by a **community-based participatory approach**, involving caregivers, persons living with dementia, faculty/researchers, and dementia-care providers
- Identify **key gaps, barriers, and priorities** across dementia care settings
- **Translate** these priorities into **actionable directions** for policy, practice, research, and innovation

Methods:

- CIHR-funded community-based participatory research
- 14 knowledge cafés with 88 caregivers, faculty, and dementia-care providers
- 2025 Advancement for Dementia Care Centre (ADCC) Showcase event, held in collaboration by Ontario Shores and Ontario Tech University, with the goal of setting priorities and recommendations for action

“There's this 'middle group'-people (with dementia) who aren't ready for LTC (long-term care) but can't live safely at home without support. **There's no public support for that group.**”

“Include caregivers from **day one**... otherwise, their **needs are missed entirely.**”

**Listen to the voices of dementia.
Integrate them into action.**

Key Recommendations:

1. **Advance national strategy in dementia care through interdisciplinary partnership** | “We need funding. More nurse practitioners, more access to geriatricians. I have a six-month wait list right now.”
2. **Invest in strengthening a comprehensive dementia care education** | “There's a disconnect between what nursing students learn and what the job actually is.”
3. **Explore technology-enabled care solutions to facilitate prevention, caregiving, and management** | “Dementia Care villages can provide safe, contained environments that still promote independence and socialization.”
4. **Connect people with the necessary resources and navigators** | “Someone needs to design a clear road map and toolkit for doctors to give to their patients once diagnosed with dementia. **We do it for cancer patients, why aren't we doing this for dementia patients?**”