There are currently 500,000 Canadians living with Alzheimer’s disease (AD) and related dementias; a number that, within a generation, could reach more than one million people across the country. In short, our aging population is fueling a rising tide of dementia that threatens to overwhelm our healthcare and social systems.

**Rising Tide**

This January during Alzheimer Awareness Month, the Alzheimer Society will be releasing a pivotal study, *Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society*. For the first time since 1991, the Society will release new and startling information on the growing economic impact of dementia in Canada. The study will also outline a series of potential intervention strategies that could help reduce the number of people affected by dementia, if our governments were to invest in the right solutions.

“Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias are a rising concern in this country, an epidemic that has the potential to cripple the Canadian healthcare system if changes are not made today,” said Debbie Benczkowski, Interim Chief Executive Officer of the Alzheimer Society of Canada. “The *Rising Tide* study is a call to action—to our country’s parliamentarians, as well as the general public—to put their minds to making change happen, while there is still time.”

**Senior Citizens: Growing Population**

Statistics Canada reports there are currently 4.3 million Canadians aged 65 years or older, which means that one in seven Canadians is now a senior citizen. By 2015, the number of seniors is expected to reach 5.4 million. As age remains the number-one risk factor for AD and related dementias, it has been long feared that the aging of our population will have direct consequences on the number of people living with dementia.

*Rising Tide* studies dementia in great depth, in an effort to understand the current demographic and epidemiologic profile of the disease, along with the economic consequences over the next 30 years. Based on what we already know about dementia, such as how to reduce the risk of dementia and how to support people living with the disease, the study also analyzes the possible effects of certain interventions, and how they could affect the healthcare and economic impacts of dementia in Canada.
Measure of Hope

Even though Rising Tide will release some frightening statistics regarding dementia and how Canadians are affected by the illness, we must remember that this only represents a future where no change is made. By investing in research and prevention, by educating and supporting our caregivers, and by raising awareness and ensuring that people are diagnosed early in the disease process, we can make a difference.

However, the Society can’t initiate change alone. The voice of the Society is only as strong as the number of Canadians we have supporting our call for action.

“With the release of the Rising Tide study, we will have the evidence we need to ensure our call for change is heard by governments across the country,” Benczkowski said. “At the same time, it is critical that Canadians continue to champion the fight against dementia, working in partnership with our governments and encouraging them to take action.”

For more information on Rising Tide, please visit www.alzheimer.ca.

The Alzheimer Society is the leading, nationwide health organization for people affected by dementia in Canada. The Society is a principal funder of Alzheimer research and training, provides enhanced care and support to people with the disease, their families and their caregivers, while acting as a prominent voice in the call for policy change within all levels of government. Active in more than 140 communities across Canada, the Alzheimer Society is also at the forefront of worldwide efforts to fight dementia as a founding member and affiliate of Alzheimer’s Disease International.

For more information on Alzheimer’s disease or related dementias, Alzheimer Society programs or to support the Alzheimer’s Advocacy Campaign, contact 1-800-616-8816 or visit the Society’s website at www.alzheimer.ca.