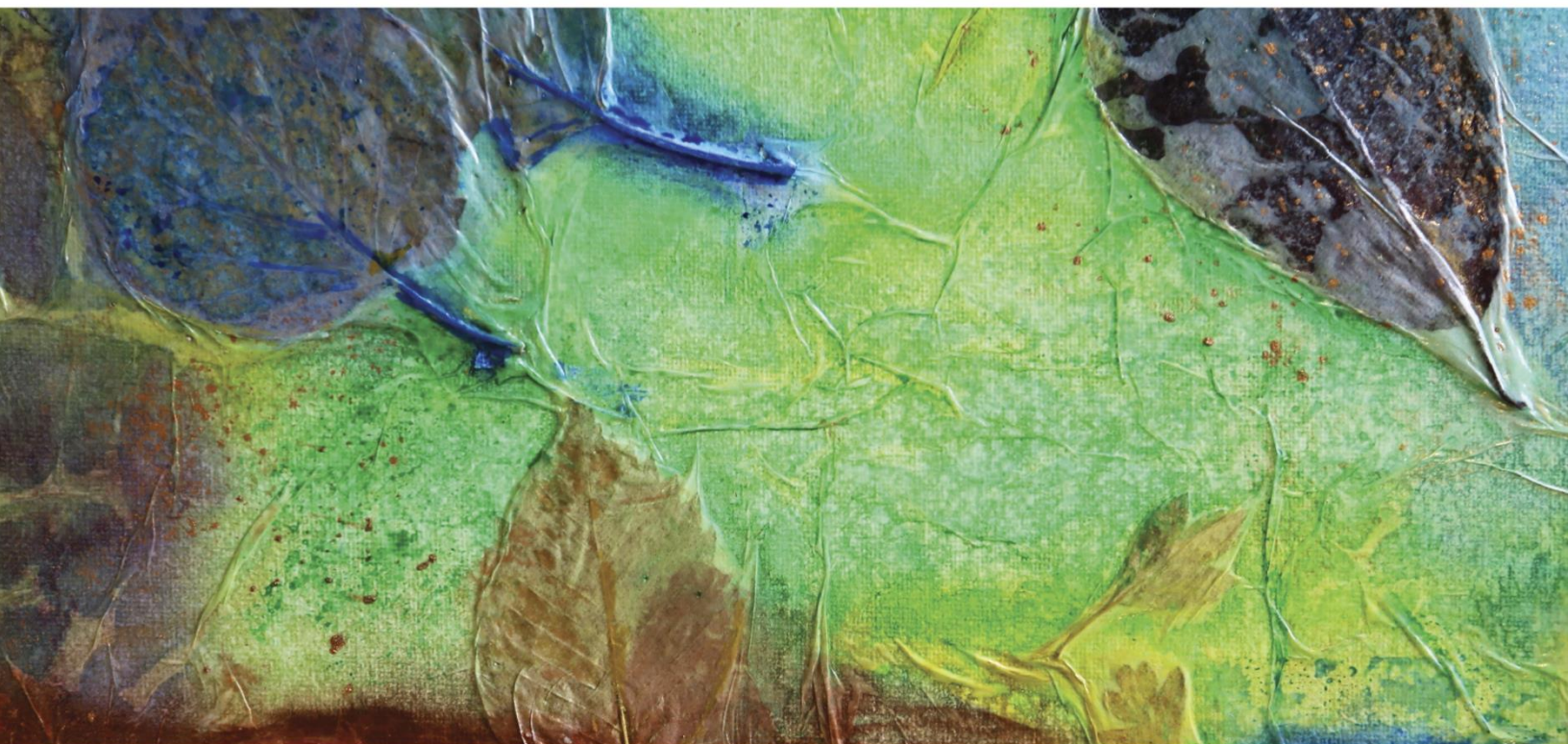


Alberta Dementia Strategy and Action Plan

# Progress Report



Artwork by Yolanda Scigliano, a participant in the Opening Minds Through Art program

Alberta Health, Government of Alberta

March 7, 2019

Alberta Dementia Strategy and Action Plan Progress Report

ISBN 978-1-4601-4275-2

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Last Updated: March 2019

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All hyperlinks to additional or third party content are written in full form at the back of report.

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## Introduction

The [Alberta Dementia Strategy and Action Plan](#) is a five-year plan that aims to improve the lives of Albertans living with dementia, as well as the families, friends and communities who support them. The strategy also aims to build public awareness about brain health.

Released in December 2017, the dementia strategy recognizes dementia as a health priority, as well as a larger societal concern as the number of Albertans living with dementia is increasing.

The dementia strategy sets out 26 actions that are being led by the Government of Alberta, Alberta Health Services and the Alzheimer Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories. We are working with many other partners in health, social service and community-based organizations that support people living with dementia and their caregivers. We also rely on the insight and experience from people living with dementia and their caregivers to help achieve the outcomes outlined in the strategy.

These initiatives are helping us envision a future in which ***Albertans are committed to optimizing brain health and valuing and supporting individuals impacted by dementia from its onset through to end-of-life.***

The Alberta Dementia Strategy and Action Plan outlines four outcomes to improve the lives of Albertans by:

1. Increasing public awareness of dementia and optimal brain health
2. Enhancing support in communities

3. Improving timely recognition, diagnosis, care and support
4. Improving accessibility to high-quality care and services

Additionally, the Government of Alberta is committed to positioning Alberta as a leader in dementia research and technology, and ensuring the province has a trained and supported workforce to provide dementia care and services for Albertans and their families.

The government is also committed to publicly report progress on the dementia strategy.

To help in this work, an implementation and monitoring committee is providing vision, leadership, direction and support for the strategy and partners involved. The committee was set up following the release of the strategy. Its members include a person living with dementia, caregivers, and representatives from health and community organizations.

### **Why is continual action necessary?**

While many supports and services are already available to improve the lives of individuals impacted by dementia, more can and must be done. With the right health and social care supports, Albertans living with dementia can continue to live full and active lives for many years.

To date, the provincial government has invested about \$12.8 million in the dementia strategy. Grants are helping community partners (including those in health care) develop programs and services to

reduce stigma, change attitudes and behaviours, and improve individuals' independence, quality of life and well-being.

Our partners are helping Albertans better understand what they can do to reduce their risk of dementia and how they can support people and families living with and affected by dementia.

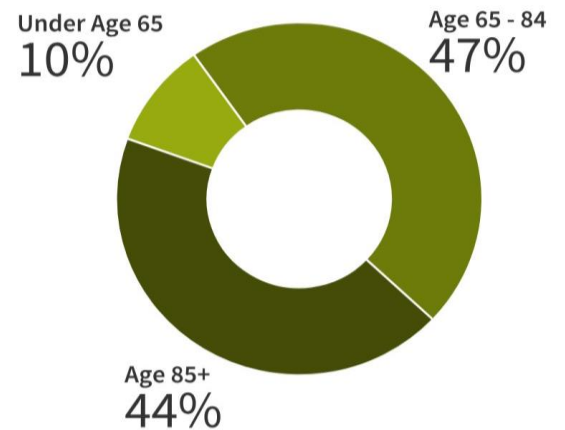


## Dementia in Alberta

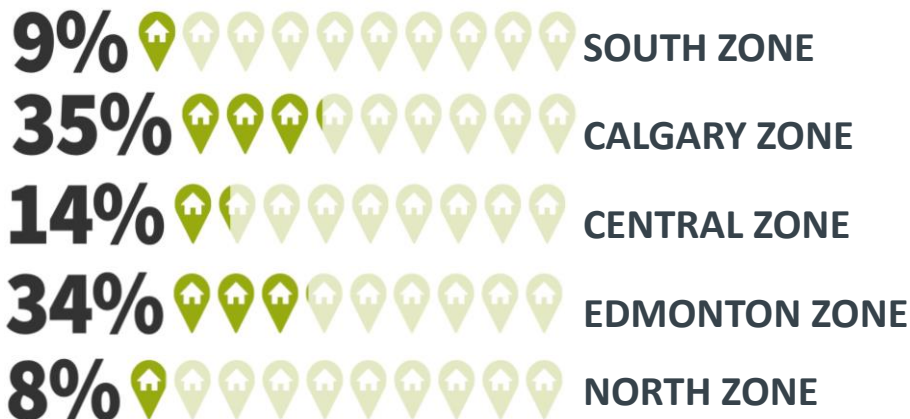
*More than 45,800 Albertans are living with dementia (as of March 31, 2018).*

### How old are Albertans who are living with dementia?

- About 4,435 people, or almost 10%, are between 40 and 65 years old.
- About 21,410 people – almost half – are between 65 to 84 years old.
- About 19,960 people, or 44%, are age 85 or older.



### Where in Alberta do people living with dementia reside?



Alberta Health Services has organized Alberta into five geographic zones. For more information on the zones click [here](#).

## Achievement Highlights

The Government of Alberta has been working closely with community partners to improve the lives of Albertans living with dementia and their caregivers.

### Reducing Stigma and Creating Supportive Communities

*We know that stigma is one of the biggest barriers to living well with dementia. Albertans living with dementia and their caregivers need supportive communities and services, including access to high-quality and helpful information, to remain active and engaged community members.*

The Government of Alberta has invested in community partners to reduce stigma and support individuals living with dementia and their caregivers.

This includes improving access to knowledgeable people, information and supports, all to assist them with navigating the health and social systems, such as:

- **Dementia Advice** through Health Link 811 is a phone service developed by Alberta Health Services (AHS). Callers who have questions or needs related to dementia are referred to nurses with special training in dementia care. The nurses provide health-related advice and connect people to community services and supports.



- Dementia Advice was launched in September 2015 as a pilot program. It became available across the province in May 2016, and became a permanent, ongoing program through Health Link in April 2018.
- In 2018, there were more than 700 referrals to [Dementia Advice](#).



Sheila McGuire, a Dementia Advice nurse, and Dr. MaryJane Shankel, a physician in AHS's Calgary Zone, demonstrate the Dementia Advice program during a Dec. 6, 2018 Facebook Live session.

- **First Link<sup>®</sup>** (led by the Alzheimer Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories) is a referral program that connects newly diagnosed Albertans, their families, and caregivers to services and learning resources. This tool helps people better navigate how to live with dementia.
  - By referring someone to First Link<sup>®</sup>, primary care teams and other health and community service providers proactively connect their patients and clients to one of the Alzheimer Societies in Alberta. This proactive approach makes it easier for people to access support.
  - The Government of Alberta funded the expansion of First Link<sup>®</sup> across Alberta. The program is now available in Edmonton, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, Medicine Hat and Calgary (through a partnership with the Alzheimer Society of Calgary).
  - In 2018, there were more than 4,280 referrals to [First Link<sup>®</sup>](#).

Under the Alberta Dementia Strategy and Action Plan, eight [Community Innovation Grants](#) supported initiatives to better integrate people living with dementia into their communities and reduce stigma. These projects aimed to optimize people's independence, quality of life and well-being, and were designed to identify the potential for expansion to other Alberta communities in the future.

- **Dementia Friendly Communities** (led by the Brenda Strafford Foundation) is building community capacity to support people living with dementia so they feel safe and included where they work, live and socialize. The Dementia Friendly Communities initiative is raising public awareness about dementia with the aim to reduce stigma.



Kathy Coutts (left), museum and archives specialist at the Okotoks Museum and Archives, explores what it's like to have limited sensory abilities, as part of an Okotoks session on the Dementia Friendly initiative. Cheryl-Lyn Carlson, volunteer with Dementia Friendly Communities, assists.

- This [initiative](#) has spurred the creation of education resources for businesses, employers and community organizations on how to be dementia-friendly in the business world. It also incorporated education in school curriculum on how to build dementia-friendly communities.
- The Calgary Fire Department has now implemented an online dementia training module, completed by more than 1,400 firefighters across Calgary.

## Calgary Fire Department: Building Understanding and Responsiveness through Training

Captain Todd Puzey from Fire Station #29 “A” wrote a letter about how training through **Dementia Friendly Communities** helped his team in an emergency. A crew was called to help a gentleman who had wandered away from home and was displaying signs of dementia. The man wasn’t dressed for the winter weather, with only slip-on dress shoes, sweat pants, a light jacket, no gloves, no socks, nor hat.

*“When we questioned him about this he didn’t think it was odd at all for the time of year,”* Captain Puzey wrote. *“He was sure he was a block from home but he kept giving us the address he had lived at for most of his life.”*

Puzey wrote that the dementia-friendly training helped the crew respond respectfully to help the gentleman.

*“I thought you would like to know that the training we received from you was useful for us, and ultimately helped in making the positive outcome for this gentleman,”* Puzey wrote. *“At first he was a bit defensive with us, but as learned in your course we made it clear that we were there to help, and we knelt in the snow at his level to look him straight in the eye; this calmed him down and he became cooperative.”*

- **Opening Minds Through Art** (led by the Alzheimer Society of Calgary) promotes engagement, autonomy and dignity through art therapy. More than 50 facilitators in Alberta have been trained to provide the art therapy program and support people living with dementia to express themselves through art.



A member of Calgary's "Club 36" adult day program participates in an Opening Minds through Art session with Hailey White, a nursing student from the University of Calgary.

- The **MusicLINKs** program (led by the LINKages Society of Alberta) used music to engage people living with dementia in long-term care facilities. The program matched 24 people living with dementia with two youth volunteers each. The small groups worked with family members and care teams to develop weekly activities and a personalized music playlist to engage each participating resident. Residents who sometimes had difficulty communicating through speech were observed not only



clapping, singing and dancing to their songs, but were also often able to remember the words to the songs they had chosen.

- **CARERS Program** (led by the Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens' Association) was an evidence-based training program for caregivers, designed to help them better manage the day-to-day demands of caring for someone living with dementia. Sessions were delivered in Mandarin and Cantonese. Participants reported less caregiver burden and significantly improved mastery of their caregiving responsibilities.
- **Dementia Support Community Collaborative** (led by Alberta Health Services' WestView Health Centre) brought together health, social and business sectors to better include people living with dementia in community life. The project also aimed to reduce stigma for people impacted by dementia.
  - A team visited 83 local businesses in Parkland County, Stony Plain and Spruce Grove to determine their level of awareness about the needs of people living with dementia and to raise awareness of the concept of a dementia-friendly community.
  - The project involved local mayors and municipal councils, as well as Grant MacEwan University.
  - The Minds in Motion<sup>®</sup> program was established at the Transalta Tri-Leisure Centre in Spruce Grove, with help from the Alzheimer Society of Alberta and Northwest



Territories and Family and Community Support Services. Minds in Motion® is a fitness and social program for people experiencing early symptoms of Alzheimer's disease or another dementia.

- Not-for-profit groups are continuing to lead and deliver programming through the WestView Health Centre.
  
- **Moving for Memory program** (led by the Edmonton Southside Primary Care Network) provides on-site physical and brain exercises to promote healthy behaviour changes in people experiencing a range of cognitive impairment, from mild to more advanced dementia. The program aims to increase participants' overall well-being and health.
  - Beyond on-site activities, 40 per cent of program participants continued their physical exercises at home, and 95 per cent said they were satisfied with the program and would recommend it to a friend.
  - The Edmonton Southside Primary Care Network continues to offer the Moving for Memory program. Session plans and a workbook make this program easy to implement at other Primary Care Networks or through other organizations.
  
- The **Life My Way...Living Well with Dementia** project (led by Lifestyle Options and Choices in Community Living) embraced an innovative model of dementia care from the United Kingdom,

where staff are specially trained to understand, support and be emotionally in tune with residents.

- The Butterfly Household Model of Care helps staff and families be person-centred and focused on relationships.
- The model was evaluated in four designated supportive living sites in Alberta, where staff created activities to engage residents through living environments designed to be vibrant and full of life. The experience was very positive for residents and families.

- **Stakeholder Inclusion in Practice Change** (University of Lethbridge) was a research project at St. Michael's Health Centre in Lethbridge where residents participated in food preparation, mealtime set-up and clean-up alongside staff. The project encouraged residents to take part in everyday activities that improved their quality of life and promoted choice and inclusion.

- Residents living with dementia shared their learning and knowledge with family members and staff – a collaboration that went both ways and promoted mutual understanding for all. Together, they significantly improved the physical and social environment and person-centred care practices at mealtimes.

## **Timely Recognition, Diagnosis, Care and Support**

*We know that timely recognition and diagnosis of dementia is a critical part of helping people with dementia, their families, caregivers, and communities. Earlier access to supports, services and interventions through primary health care teams helps reduce troublesome symptoms and supports people to live as well as possible.*

The Government of Alberta is investing in partners who actively promote timely recognition and diagnosis of dementia, and who are changing current medical and health-care practices. These partners are integrating health care with community supports.

- **Mental Health First Aid for Seniors** is a course made available to the public, free of charge. The course teaches seniors, families, friends, and staff in care settings and communities, to promote mental health for seniors. Participants learn knowledge and skills to intervene early when issues such as dementia and delirium first emerge.
  - This course is funded under [Valuing Mental Health: Next Steps](#), which includes 18 actions that respond to recommendations from the Alberta Mental Health Review.
  - More than 500 individuals have completed the [Mental Health First Aid for Seniors](#) training in Alberta.
  - In addition, 20 people have gone through advanced education to become trainers themselves. These trainers expand availability and increase access to this course for all Albertans.

- **Primary Health Care Integrated Geriatric Services Initiative** (led by Alberta Health Services) developed dementia curriculum to educate primary health care teams to better recognize, diagnose and provide ongoing care and support for Albertans living with dementia or other geriatric syndromes.
  - Five Central Zone Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and one North Zone PCN are currently participating in this [initiative](#). Nine community teams within the zones are working with local health, social and community partners to understand community needs and come up with an action plan to provide ongoing care and support for those living with mild cognitive impairment, dementia, frailty or other geriatric syndromes.
  - Other PCNs are interested in this initiative so they can better support this population in their communities using a broad, primary health care approach.

## **High-Quality Care**

*We know that high-quality care, including coordinated and integrated services, reduces the burden on Albertans living with dementia and their caregivers.*

The Government of Alberta is committed to ensuring people living with dementia experience timely, accessible, integrated, and high quality care and services.

- **Home Care Enhancements** underway allow more Albertans, including those living with dementia, to remain safely at home longer, as they age or their care needs change.
  - This includes addressing the needs of people living with dementia to have a variety of in-home and day program respite options.
- The **Elder-Friendly Care Project** supports collaboration among hospital care teams to protect the cognition and function of patients, and decrease medical problems such as delirium. The project supports the work to transition patients from hospital to home or a continuing care facility.
  - Since April 2018, more than 50 acute-care units from 13 hospitals across Alberta have engaged in workshops to become elder friendly. Continuing care facilities are also participating.
  - An online [Elder Friendly Care Toolkit](#) has been developed to support practice changes.
- The Government of Alberta has expanded the availability of **Facility-Based Continuing Care Spaces**, specifically dementia and long-term care spaces.
  - The provincial government is on track to achieve its commitment of providing 2,000 new facility-based spaces by March 2019.

- The ***Resident and Family Councils Act***, implemented in April 2018, supports the establishment of resident and family councils in facility-based continuing care settings.
  - The Act is designed to empower Albertans living in supportive living and long-term care facilities to take an active and engaged role in their own care.
  - The legislation gives residents – including those living with dementia and their families – a formalized way to discuss their quality of life and care, and provide input into how their homes are run.
  
- The **Appropriate Use of Antipsychotics** initiative has successfully reduced the inappropriate use of antipsychotics, where those medications are being used for people who haven't been diagnosed with psychosis. The project began in long-term care facilities to improve the quality of life of residents.
  - In 2012, 27 per cent of people in long-term care without a diagnosis of psychosis were receiving antipsychotics.
  - In 2017, after the project was implemented, 17 per cent of these people were receiving antipsychotics. This is the lowest rate in the country.
  - This project has since expanded to designated supportive living sites. There, inappropriate use of antipsychotics has decreased to 17 per cent from 20 per cent over the past two years.
  - Learn more about this initiative in this [video](#).

- A [toolkit](#) for health-care professionals is also available.

## **Research and Workforce**

*We know that investing in research and technology can improve the lives of Albertans impacted by dementia. We are also committed to ensuring Alberta has a trained and supported workforce to provide dementia care and services.*

- An **Alberta Dementia Research Framework**, under development with multiple partners, will inform and support the future of dementia research in Alberta. Stakeholders interested in carrying out or funding dementia research are part of the discussion.
- **Alberta's Health Care Aide Competency Profile** was updated in 2018 and outlines the core knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes required by all health care aides in Alberta, including those who look after people with cognitive impairments, such as dementia. New provincial training curriculum for health care aides is being developed.



## What's Next?

We will continue to work with partners to improve the lives of Albertans impacted by dementia and to raise awareness and understanding of dementia and optimal brain health.

Over the next year, this work will include:

### **Reducing stigma and creating supportive communities**

- Address and reduce dementia stigma in Alberta by supporting community partners to raise public awareness on the importance of brain health.
- Enhance respite and support services for caregivers, including the creation of more adult day program spaces.
- Support the completion of a Dementia Friendly Toolkit for Alberta communities interested in becoming dementia friendly.

### **Providing more timely recognition, diagnosis, care and support**

- Increase the availability of dementia information and resources for health-care providers.
- Release a provincial strategy and work plan for appropriate prescribing and medication use for older adults, including those living with dementia.

### **Providing accessible high-quality care**

- Continue to work with designated supportive living and long-term care partners to sustain the progress already made on the appropriate use of antipsychotic medications.

- Begin working with partners on actions to address pain management and depressive moods, and improve quality of life among residents living in Alberta's designated supportive living and long-term care facilities.

### **Supporting research and workforce**

- Finalize and begin to implement the dementia research framework to guide and inform dementia research in Alberta.
- Update the health care aide provincial curriculum to align with the new health care aide competency profile, in consultation with experts and stakeholders.

### **Continue monitoring and reporting**

- Develop and share information on new, emerging and innovative activities around the Alberta Dementia Strategy and Action Plan.
- Continue to work with the dementia strategy's implementation and monitoring committee to ensure oversight and support.

## Conclusion

We are proud of the achievements we have made together through partnership and collaboration, and know there is still more to do. The Government of Alberta remains committed to improving the lives of persons living with dementia and their caregivers so they may live life well and with purpose, supported by their communities and social and health services.

## Websites

### [Alberta Dementia Strategy and Action Plan](https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/772005d6-94f8-4a62-a39b-cc91265f3fca/resource/40959fbb-ca1d-4b44-8864-f05e8d1c6d0f/download/alberta-dementia-strategy-and-action-plan.pdf)

(<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/772005d6-94f8-4a62-a39b-cc91265f3fca/resource/40959fbb-ca1d-4b44-8864-f05e8d1c6d0f/download/alberta-dementia-strategy-and-action-plan.pdf>)

### [AHS In My Zone](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/zones/zones.aspx)

(<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/zones/zones.aspx>)

### [Dementia Advice](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page15482.aspx)

(<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page15482.aspx>)

### [First Link<sup>®</sup>](http://alzheimer.ca/en/ab/First%20Link)

(<http://alzheimer.ca/en/ab/First%20Link>)

### [Community Innovation Grants](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/scns/Page13339.aspx)

(<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/scns/Page13339.aspx>)

### [Dementia Friendly Communities initiative](https://www.thebsf.ca/dementia-friendly-communities.html)

(<https://www.thebsf.ca/dementia-friendly-communities.html>)

### [Valuing Mental Health: Next Steps](https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460134771)

(<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460134771>)

### [Mental Health First Aid for Seniors](https://www.mhfa.ca/en/course-type/seniors)

(<https://www.mhfa.ca/en/course-type/seniors>)

### [Primary Health Care Integrated Geriatric Services Initiative](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/scns/Page13526.aspx)

(<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/scns/Page13526.aspx>)

[Community Innovation Grants for People Affected by Dementia](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/scns/Page13339.aspx)

(<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/scns/Page13339.aspx>)

[Elder Friendly Care Toolkit](https://albertahealthservices.ca/scns/Page13345.aspx)

(<https://albertahealthservices.ca/scns/Page13345.aspx>)

[Resident and Family Council Act](https://www.alberta.ca/resident-family-councils.aspx)

(<https://www.alberta.ca/resident-family-councils.aspx>)

[Appropriate Use of Antipsychotics online video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ya4ovkRWmV4&feature=youtu.be)

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[Appropriate Use of Antipsychotics Toolkit](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/scns/auatoolkit.aspx)

(<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/scns/auatoolkit.aspx>)