

# Call for Dementia Strategy wonderful news: Alzheimer Society CEO

By Steve LeBlanc  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Ironically, Mary Burnett wouldn't be personally affected by dementia until long after joining the Alzheimer Society's Hamilton-Halton chapter.

"Five years ago my father started doing unusual things. My siblings thought 'Mary you're seeing things because you're in the business,'" recalled the CEO of the Hamilton-Halton, Brant and Haldimand-Norfolk chapters.

Her suspicions proved valid. Dad was eventually diagnosed with dementia and passed away two years ago.

Burnett knows all too well that her family's story is by no means uncommon.

## Statistics

In Halton alone, this year, there's an estimated 8,700 people living with some form of dementia.

"And that number's going to more than double in the next 20 years. Age is the biggest risk

(of dementia) and we're an aging population." With that in mind, last week's call by Milton MP Lisa Raitt on Parliament Hill to establish a National Dementia Strategy was met with great optimism.

"It's wonderful. This is something that should cross all party lines," said Burnett, noting that Halton MPP Indira Naidoo-Harris has also been a staunch advocate for more support for dementia care and support services — calling for a provincial government action plan.

"It's not about politics, it's a human rights issue. Sadly, there's little supports in place until the later stages of the disease," said Burnett. "We have a lot of work to do at the national and provincial level to respond to the huge demand ahead."

Nationally, 1.4 million Canadians will have dementia by 2031, according to a report compiled by the Senate Social Affairs Committee. "The findings of the report are startling in-

deed, and provides further proof that we need a strategy to plan for the impact that this terrible disease is going to continue to have on Canadians," said Raitt.

Echoing the Milton MP's comments in Parliament, Burnett stressed how dementia doesn't just affect the person living with it, but their family and friends.

"For every person living with dementia, there's 10 more people impacted by it."

Among the top priorities of a National Dementia Strategy, Burnett said, should be more resources for education.

"We have one educator for Halton and she's run off her feet.

Public education is so important,"

said the CEO, who characterized dementia as a "rupture of social relationships" — where those affected can often be estranged from people and places that were once an important part of their lives.

Burnett explained that in many cases an

“  
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”

Mary Burnett  
CEO, Alzheimer Society  
Hamilton-Halton chapter

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## Transportation Master Plan: Public Input Session #1

### Help shape the future of transportation in Milton

We are developing a Transportation Master Plan (TMP), in conjunction with consultants MMM Group, as part of our proactive approach to planning for growth and our vision for a well-connected community. This plan will help us prepare for a future where residents, employees and visitors have viable transportation choices to travel in and around the town to get to work, school and play destinations.

The TMP will define an integrated network of walking, cycling, transit routes and streets that are safe and efficient for the movement of people and goods. This network will serve varying ages and abilities and will link to neighbouring municipalities and the greater surrounding region. We encourage you to get involved!

Thursday, December 1, 2016  
5:00 pm - 8:30 pm  
Milton Sports Centre (Meeting Room #2)  
605 Santa Maria Boulevard

#### Agenda:

- Drop-in/chat with consultants: 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm
- Presentation: 6:00 pm - 6:30 pm
- Hands-on, interactive workshop: 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

#### Participate online

Share your feedback using an interactive online tool:

[www.milton.ca/transportationmasterplan](http://www.milton.ca/transportationmasterplan)

#### For more information, please contact:

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