

## **New Website Provides Dementia Education for Medical Professionals**

*“No other on-line dementia tool like it,” says physician.*

**Toronto, ON. March 18, 2004** – The Ontario College of Family Physicians and the Physician Education Initiative of the Ontario Strategy for Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementias announced today the launch of its new website [www.dementiaeducation.ca](http://www.dementiaeducation.ca). The website offers curriculum materials and continuing education programs in an easy-to-use, interactive, real-time medium.

The Dementia Education Website offers up-to-date information on dementia and features web conferencing, e-mail, surveys, boardroom capabilities, and more. Physicians, residents and medical students will be able to access curriculum material and updates on the latest research and advances in care, e-mail or participate in an online discussion forum.

Alzheimer Disease and related dementias affect over one in 13 people over the age of 65 in Canada<sup>1</sup>. In fact, there is expected to be a 138 per cent increase in new cases of Alzheimer Disease or a related dementia in Ontario between 2000 and 2028<sup>2</sup>. Ongoing training and education is paramount for medical professionals as they treat and care for more patients with dementia.

“This new site is a unique way for physicians and students to keep up-to-date. There is no other on-line dementia learning tool like it,” says Dr. John Puxty, Geriatrician and Chair of the Website Committee. “It’s exciting because the interactive nature of the site will provide a forum for publishing and updating materials and the potential for increased networking and collaboration between experts, educators and physicians.”

"The website will help physicians deliver the best quality of care for people with dementia," says George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. "Our government fully supports flexible approaches to physician education that deliver the information physicians need, when they need it. Our people's health is our most precious resource, and this initiative will assist doctors with established practices and prepare the next generation of Ontario doctors to care for our seniors."

There has been a shift towards on-line learning over the last few years and physicians are using the Internet more in their practices to facilitate continuing education<sup>3,4</sup>. The Dementia Education Website addresses these trends and provides a high quality learning environment.

“On-line learning fits into my lifestyle,” says Dr. Alan Taniguchi, Family Physician in Hamilton. “But I need to make sure that the information I’m receiving is easy to access, credible and updated in real-time. The Dementia Education Website is an important resource and its interactive capabilities are an excellent way to create dialogue.”

After a thorough review of 22 existing dementia education websites, it was determined that although many of the sites reviewed were good, no single site had all the features the committee wanted to provide in an on-line learning tool.

The Dementia Education Website is a state-of-the-art resource on dementia designed to provide ongoing learning to physicians, educators and medical students with the goal of improving access to information on the care of individuals with dementia. The materials on the site are available to professionals in both English and French. This website is a welcome addition to the various Initiatives already in place to improve care of the person with Alzheimer disease.

"We are pleased to support this website and the effort to promote education on Alzheimer Disease and related dementias," says John Gerretsen, Minister Responsible for Seniors. "We have a responsibility to protect the health and well-being of our citizens. This educational resource for physicians, educators and medical students demonstrates our commitment to help seniors live in safety, with the dignity and respect they deserve."

The website provides links to a number of useful patient and caregiver education websites, including the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

The Dementia Education Website is made possible through sponsorship from the government of Ontario as part of the province’s Strategy for Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementias. Additional support has also been provided in the form of unrestricted educational grants from Janssen-Ortho Inc., Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc., and Pfizer Canada Inc.

Please visit [www.dementiaeducation.ca](http://www.dementiaeducation.ca) to explore the site and the curriculum material available.

The Ontario College of Family Physicians is a provincial chapter of the College of Family Physicians of Canada and is a voluntary, not-for-profit association that promotes family medicine in Ontario through leadership, education and advocacy. The Physician Education Initiative of the Ontario Strategy for Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementias steering committee represents family medicine, geriatric medicine, geriatric psychiatry, Alzheimer Society of Ontario, and university medical programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Alzheimer Society Ontario fact sheet April 2003

<sup>2</sup> Estimates extrapolated from: Hopkins R., Hopkins J. Dementia Projections for the countries, regional municipalities and districts of Ontario. Geriatric Psychiatry Program Clinical Research Bulletin No. 13. January 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Crilly et al. (1996) Survey of Physician Needs in Geriatric Education in Southwestern Ontario. Gerontology & Geriatrics Education, 16 53-65.

<sup>4</sup> Richardson, ML & Norris, TE (1997) On-line delivery of continuing medical education over the world-wide web: an online needs assessment, American J. Roentgenology, 168, 1161-1164