



## Dementia Link Bulletin

The Dementia Link clinical advice line within Health Link will provide specialized telephone-based support for Albertans living with dementia, as well as those providing care to them. Dementia Link is a collaboration between Health Link and the Seniors Health Strategic Clinical Network. The clinical service provided by Dementia Link will complement existing community based services such as the Alzheimer Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories' (ASANT) First Link service. Dementia Link will provide convenient, province-wide access to advice on clinical issues that occur during the course of dementia.

### Who is Dementia Link being developed for?

- Phase 1: Albertans living with dementia and those caring for them
- Phase 2: Clinicians and service providers.

### The Process

- Dementia Link will be accessed through Health Link by dialling 811
- The Health Link nurse will conduct an assessment and provide recommendations, as they currently do
- Decision-making tools are being developed to help the Health Link nurse provide advice, suggestions and strategies to respond to the immediate needs of the caller
- When appropriate, a Dementia Link specialist will be asked to follow up with the caller
- The Dementia Link specialist will be a Registered Nurse with education and experience in dementia care and will be able to offer specialized clinical advice
- The Dementia Link specialist will conduct an assessment, provide supportive listening and short term psychosocial support for the caller, and will facilitate linkages with resources for the person with dementia and for the caregiver.



## The Outcome

It is anticipated that Dementia Link will positively impact several outcomes, including:

- Increased access to appropriate information and supports for people living with dementia and their family caregivers
- Reduced family caregiver distress
- Increased use of Health Link by seniors and their family caregivers
- Decreased unnecessary emergency department visits.



## Staffing

- Dementia Link specialists are currently being hired
- The hours that Dementia Link will be available are being determined.

## Anticipated Timeline

- Fall 2015
  - Dementia Link opens for service in the North, Central and South Zones to those living with Dementia or those caring for them
- Spring 2016
  - Dementia Link welcomes callers from Edmonton and Calgary Zones
- Fall 2017
  - Hours of service expand to 10 hours per day, 7 days per week
  - Dementia Link becomes available to clinicians and service providers
  - North, Central and South Zones were selected as the Zones in which to begin Dementia Link in order to provide them support sooner than later. The urban Zones of Edmonton and Calgary are relatively well positioned with Dementia support, when compared to the other three zones.

**For more information, or if you have questions, contact [Shawna Reid, Practice Lead Dementia Link](#)**

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