

# Dementia Advice

## Background and Access

Dementia Advice through Health Link was identified very early in the Alberta Health Plan for 2010-2015 (“Becoming the Best”), which called for the establishment of a caregiver advice line living with dementia in their home and community.



## What's New At Dementia Advice?

Expanded availability!

On May 30, 2016, the exciting news was shared that ALL Albertans can now access dementia-related advice through Health Link.

- The news was spread through radio, television and print news, partner newsletters, and Alberta Health Services paths such as Zone News and Interchange. We are so very appreciative of all the support.
- Hours of availability have expanded. Dementia Advice nurses are now available Monday to Friday 8am to 8:15pm, and Saturday and Sunday from noon until 8:15 pm.
- Two new Dementia Advice nurses have joined the team. One in Edmonton and now our first nurse based out of the Calgary Health Link call centre. Welcome Nadine and Corinne to the team.





From Left to Right: Debra (Dementia Advice Manager), Corinne (Nurse), Kathleen (Nurse), Rose (Nurse), Nadine (Nurse), Shawna (Practice Lead)

## How Are Things Going?

- Referrals and connections with clients have essentially doubled since formally launching provincially.
- Pre-May 30, 2016:
  - Dementia Advice received 8-10 referrals on average from Health Link per week.
  - Dementia Advice nurses connected with clients on average 17.5 times per week.
- Post-May 30, 2016:
  - Dementia Advice has received an average of 21 referrals from Health Link per week.
  - Nurses have connected with clients on average 34.25 times per week.

## What Users of Dementia Advice are Saying!

“She [the Dementia Advice nurse] even asked me how I was doing, so she was really compassionate, and then it was just a wonderful experience and it made all the difference in the world to me.”

“It was one of the best conversations I’ve had.”

“The service [Dementia Advice through Health Link] made all the difference to me in the world. It really did.”

“It was getting critical and we caught some breaks, but honestly, I would have maybe dropped my mom off and walked away from the problem if the service [Dementia Advice through Health Link] hadn’t existed.”

“The [Dementia Advice] nurse was fabulous. She was considerate. She was compassionate. She was informative. She was fantastic.”



## Did You Know?

- At any given point, Dementia Advice through Health Link has a caseload of about 60 open referrals, all in various stages of assessment.
- Important inquiries are made prior to each and every assessment (recent acute care admissions, home care services in place, etc.) to gain as complete a picture as possible before the main conversation.
- Significant follow-up is required after each assessment, identifying relevant resources, sharing information, and facilitating connections.
- The Dementia Advice nurses spend over half their time talking on the phone to clients either in the initial assessment or in follow-up conversations. The remainder of their time is spent conducting pre-assessment inquiries and post-assessment follow-up, completing administrative duties, and nurturing relationships with important community partners and resources.
- The Dementia Advice nurses follow up with callers about a month after the issue was addressed to check on the original concern, to inquire as to the effectiveness of suggested strategies, and to see if connections to resources had been made.

More information about Dementia Advice through Health Link, and promotional materials, can be found on AHS' external website at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/scns/Page12938.aspx> (or search 'Dementia Advice' from the AHS website)

**For questions or more information, contact Shawna Reid,  
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