



## **MAKING A REFERRAL TO *First Link*<sup>®</sup>**

“Working together to link individuals and families affected by Alzheimer’s disease or a related dementia to a community of learning, services, and support.”

### **What is *First Link*<sup>®</sup>?**

- First Link<sup>®</sup> is a referral program to help individuals with dementia and their caregivers connect with Alzheimer Society of Calgary services and supports. Referrals can be made by physicians, health professionals, and other community organizations. Individuals can also contact the Alzheimer Society directly and they will receive the same supports.
- First Link<sup>®</sup> offers proactive contact with individuals and families
- First Link<sup>®</sup> provides connection to:
  - LEARNING – Dementia education programs offering information about diagnosis, day-to-day living, positive approaches to care, strategies for managing challenges and how to prepare for the future
  - SERVICES – Alzheimer Society programs and services and information about other community and health care services
  - SUPPORT – Support groups and opportunities for individual support
- Planned follow-up contacts at minimum 6 month intervals

### **Who to refer to *First Link*<sup>®</sup>?**

- Individuals with a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s Disease or a related dementia
- Caregivers
- Family members
- Individuals with a diagnosis of MCI (Mild Cognitive Impairment)

### **When to refer?**

- As soon as a diagnosis is made
- At any other time in the dementia journey

## Why refer?

- It is often difficult for families and individuals to take the first step in reaching out for help
- Information and support will help patients and families cope with more confidence
- Planning for the future is critical
- There are community and health care services that the families need to know about
- With knowledge and skills, people are able to live well with dementia

## Who can make a referral?

- Physicians
- Health Care professionals
- Community organizations working with individuals and families affected by dementia
- The individual or the family themselves can self-refer by contacting the Alzheimer Society directly

## How to refer?

- Ask the individual or family member for permission to forward their name to First Link®
- Physicians, Health Care Professionals, and Community Organizations complete a one page referral form that is faxed to First Link® 403-269-8836
- Individuals and families can also call directly and get connected

## What Happens when *First Link*® receives the referral?

### Individuals and family members will receive:

- A phone call from a support worker with Alzheimer Society of Calgary  
(For those newly diagnosed, we wait 2 weeks before calling to allow time to adjust to the diagnosis; others are contacted as soon as possible or as indicated on the referral form)
- An information package specific to their needs
- Information about education and support programs available
- Referrals to community and health care services that may be helpful
- Follow-up contact at 6 month intervals

First Link® will send a confirmation to each referring professional when contact has been made with the individual or family.

For more information, contact the Alzheimer Society of Calgary at:

403-290-0110

[findsupport@alzheimercalgary.ca](mailto:findsupport@alzheimercalgary.ca)

[www.alzheimercalgary.ca](http://www.alzheimercalgary.ca)