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Local Alzheimer?s Society allocated $190,000 for dementia resources

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The Alzheimer's Society of Dufferin County is receiving additional help this holiday season with funding from the provincial government.

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones visited the local Alzheimer's Society, located at 25 Centennial Rd., on Friday (Nov. 29), to announce the provincial government is providing it with $190,800 for dementia resources. Jones also announced an additional $129,000 in funding for the local Alzheimer's Society's First Link Navigation program.

?We know that for families and caregivers, in particular, there's a lot coming at you,? said Jones. ?The navigation program is a really important piece to make sure that we are connecting patients and clients with the services that are out there. I often talk about how we need to collaborate and leverage, and the navigation program is a really important one.?

Dementia is a broad term that describes a set of symptoms that may include memory loss, changes in mood, and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving and language. Dementia is caused when brain cells become damaged and eventually die. There are many diseases and conditions which can cause dementia, with Alzheimer's disease being the most common type.

According to the Alzheimer Society of Dufferin County, there are currently 1,500 people living with a dementia diagnosis in the County. Statistics from the Alzheimer's Society indicate that 66,900 Ontarians will develop dementia in 2024 and there is an estimated 733,000 Canadians living with dementia nationwide.

?It's a health care crisis and we know that it's about educating people,? said Carmelina Cicuto, executive director of Alzheimer Society of Dufferin County. ?We're looking at an influx of diagnoses in the next 10 to 15 years.?

The funding from the provincial government will be used to help continue the Alzheimer Society of Dufferin County's ALC program, which they do at Headwaters Hospital to transition behavioural support clients to long-term care and return back to home with support.

The additional funding will go towards their First Link Navigation program, which helps individuals with recent diagnoses of dementia and their caregivers navigate the system, including community services, support, healthcare systems and doctors.

?[The funding] is great because we can expand our services, bring in new staff, train them to get out in the community and support where they need to,? said Cicuto.