

Dear

My name is _____ and I live in your riding.

Over 18,400 Manitobans currently live with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia and this number is growing rapidly. By 2050, it is expected that almost 40,000 Manitobans will live with dementia.

Have you had someone close to you diagnosed with dementia? Sixty-two per cent of Manitobans have, including myself.

If you've also known someone living with dementia, you will be aware that it is not an easy journey – for the person facing dementia symptoms and changes, for their family, friends or neighbours. Do you know what to expect as the disease progresses or what community supports are available in Manitoba for people living with dementia and care partners?

With more and more Manitobans being diagnosed with dementia, I want to bring to your attention how crucial it is that we have the appropriate care systems in place. The need is urgent.

Being faced with the reality of a dementia diagnosis usually means needing significant support from spouses, children, siblings, friends and the health care system. Many people living with dementia and their care partners find themselves without clear pathways to access the care and services they thought would be there. Very often the journey to support someone living with dementia is unexpectedly costly, stressful and frustrating – I know this from experience.

Here are the things I hope you'll think about improving to help people like me, and our community. So many of us will experience dementia at some point in our lives if we haven't already. Improving dementia support in Manitoba benefits everyone because we are all aging. These changes must happen so that everyone can age with dignity and respect.

Five dementia support priorities for Manitoba (identified by the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba):

1. Improved housing options for seniors, including those living with dementia.
2. Additional financial supports for care partners.
3. Improved home care supports.
4. Strategies for building more dementia-friendly communities.
5. Improved supports to navigate the healthcare system.

Thank you for reading about my experience with dementia. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on the five priorities I've mentioned and what you will do to improve dementia support in our province.

Sincerely,