



DEMENTIA RESEARCH & INNOVATION FUNDERS ALLIANCE

A VOICE FOR HEALTHY BRAIN AGING

# Dementia Research and Innovation Funders Alliance

## KEY THEMES FROM LAUNCH EVENT

*A “beacon of hope for the dementia research community”*

The Dementia Research and Innovation Funders Alliance (The “Alliance”) is a new entity and integral component of the Canadian Institute of Health Research’s (CIHR) Brain Health and Cognitive Impairment in Aging (BHCIA) Research Initiative led by the CIHR Institute of Aging. The Alliance aims to **foster collaboration between research funders across Canada** in order to **maximize impact in dementia research and innovation through collaboration**.

The Alliance was formally launched at an all-day inaugural event in Toronto, Ontario, on November 2nd, 2023. On launch, the announcement saw over **25,000** impressions across CIHR and the CIHR Institute of Aging, Brain Canada, and the Alzheimer Society of Canada’s social media platforms.

Representatives from participating organizations and other stakeholders discussed the potential of the Alliance **to align, leverage, and amplify dementia research investments and activities** across Canada and began to define **key deliverables, milestones, and future activities**.



Canadian Institutes  
of Health Research

Instituts de recherche  
en santé du Canada

Canada

Several key themes emerged from the discussions:

### 1. Working together to achieve shared aims and co-create solutions:

Participants of the Alliance are eager to understand how they can best work together to achieve shared aims and co-create solutions for dementia research and innovation in Canada. This included understanding how the diverse interests, mandates, and priorities of the organizations represented can uniquely fit into, and be leveraged to achieve, the Alliance's objectives. To collaborate effectively, Alliance participants discussed the need to equalize voices across the Alliance's participants and stakeholders and align on priorities, core values, and definitions of "success" and "impact".

**Potential short-term (<1 year) deliverable:** Gather participant organizations and other stakeholders to align on priorities and definitions of "success" and "impact".

### 2. Mapping the research, innovation, and funding landscape:

Alliance participants expressed the need for a 'mapping exercise' on the current research and innovation funding landscape in Canada. The exercise would seek to understand who the stakeholders are, where each is positioned within the landscape, what organizations currently prioritize, and previous mapping exercises completed by organizations to date. It was determined that such an exercise could be used to identify where gaps exist and how the Alliance can address these through tangible actions, and the areas where Alliance participants can complement each other, including opportunities for synergy.

**Potential short to mid-term (<3 years) deliverable:** Undertake a mapping exercise of the dementia research, innovation and funding landscape - including an immediate 'stock-take' of participant organization's investments to date.

### 3. Understanding the Alliance's role in delivering on the research and innovation pillar of Canada's national dementia strategy:

Through a video message, the Minister of Health, Honorable Mark Holland, provided an overview of the Government of Canada's [national dementia strategy](#) and the role of the Alliance on the delivery of the research and innovation pillar going forward. Alliance participants discussed how the Alliance will bolster the strategy's research and innovation pillar (particularly supporting the evidence-base for dementia interventions). It was suggested that a 'research and innovation action plan' could be created by the Alliance to analyze progress against the objectives of the dementia strategy's research and innovation pillar.

**Potential short to mid-term (<3 years) deliverable:** Create a 'research and innovation action plan' to assess progress against the research and innovation pillar of the national dementia strategy.

#### 4. Enhancing knowledge exchange and mobilization:

The Alliance has an opportunity to amplify and champion the voices of researchers and innovators to translate collective knowledge into practical solutions. Alliance participants agreed that harnessing this opportunity would enable evidence-based research and practice to be implemented into policy that supports both the delivery of the research and innovation pillar of the national dementia strategy and improves outcomes for those living with dementia and their care partners/caregivers. In their discussions throughout the day, participants focused on brain-storming the ‘how’ in relation to knowledge exchange and mobilization – such as identifying the right vehicles to disseminate information to the right individuals or groups, engaging those with lived and living experience, and determining how knowledge exchange and mobilization can be more tightly embedded into research and funding opportunities.

**Potential short to mid-term (<3 years) deliverable:** Create a knowledge exchange and mobilization strategy – including how best to engage and involve those with lived and living experience.

#### 5. Establishing the immediate ‘next steps’ for the Alliance:

During the discussions, Alliance participants were asked to collectively reflect on the short-term (first year), short to mid-term (the next three years); and mid-term (beyond three years) objectives for the Alliance, with short to mid-term and mid-term objectives to be discussed in greater detail in due course. Short-term objectives were both internal and external in scope, including: a rapid ‘stock-take’ exercise of current participants’ investments to drive areas of focus going forward; establishing working groups; and a collective, public statement and/or collective funding opportunity outlining the Alliance’s determined priorities to foster awareness and gain traction in the months ahead.

**Potential short-term (<1 year) deliverable:** Maintain momentum by internally landing on areas of focus and engaging participants in working groups and externally producing a collective statement and/or collective funding opportunity.

#### Next Steps

Participating organizations and stakeholders will be brought together in spring/summer 2024 to formally establish the structure of the Alliance and set up working groups, which will begin working on key deliverables by mid-2024.

#### For More Information

More information on the Dementia Research and Innovation Funders Alliance can be found on CIHR’s [website](#).



# DEMENTIA RESEARCH & INNOVATION FUNDERS ALLIANCE

A VOICE FOR HEALTHY BRAIN AGING

With thanks to participating organizations:

