



Building on a legacy of trust

2023 Community Accountability Report

Who we are

Alberta Blue Cross® is the largest provider of health benefits in Alberta, and we're proud to build on a 75-year legacy that reaches more than 1.8 million customers. Since our doors first opened in 1948, we've championed our communities by supporting the health and wellness of Albertans. As we continue to grow, we continue to impact people's lives for the better.



\$150,000

distributed through the

**COMMUNITY
WELLBEING
GRANT PROGRAM**

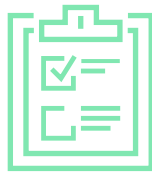


More than

\$39,000

*raised to support 86 charitable
organizations through our*

EMPLOYEE GIVING CAMPAIGN



102

applications

for our Built Together program



\$29,677.⁶⁸

given to 10 charities through our

**EMPLOYEE
CARING FOR A CAUSE
FUNDRAISERS**



Winner

*of 2 National
Philanthropy Day awards*

\$75,858.40 *donated to*

45

**CHARITABLE
ORGANIZATIONS
IN ALBERTA**

through Hearts of Blue



Nominated for the
**UNITED WAY
RED TIE
AWARDS**

We'd love to hear from you

We would greatly appreciate your feedback on this report. After you finish your review, please take a moment to complete a short survey [here](#).

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Trust is earned through actions, and our commitment to our communities remains the driving force behind everything we do.

Introduction

Building on a legacy of trust

In 2023, Alberta Blue Cross celebrated our 75th anniversary. A lot has changed since we opened our doors in 1948. Over the past 75 years, we've built benefit plans, office buildings, sophisticated claims and administration systems and an organization that has served the health needs of generations. Yet despite all of this, the most important thing we've built is a high level of trust with our customers and communities.

Trust is earned through actions, and our commitment to our communities remains the driving force behind everything we do. Every year, we strive to do more and do better, whether that's through our community partnerships, programs or our employee champions. Since 1948, our mandate has been to support the health and wellbeing of Albertans, and we continue to advance this mandate through community engagement.

To measure the impact we have on our communities, we work closely with our community partners to assess outcomes of our involvements. We also consult with the London Benchmarking Group to compare our work against global best practices. The London Benchmarking Group is a global network of hundreds of companies using the same model to improve the management, measurement and reporting of corporate social investment. The LBG model is recognized as the global benchmark for measuring corporate community and philanthropic investment.

At the same time, we maintain Caring Company certification through Imagine Canada. The Caring Company trustmark is Canada's premier public expression of excellence in community investment and social responsibility. More than 70 leading Canadian companies maintain this certification.

We appreciate the trust that has been placed in Alberta Blue Cross, and our promise is to continue to earn this trust through the active role we play in our communities.

Finally, we're proud to continue advancing our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and Reconciliation. We continue to align our community investments with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of Good Health and Wellbeing, Reduced Inequalities and Quality Education. 100 per cent of our community investments made in 2023, as audited by the London Benchmarking Group, aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

From our humble beginnings of typing up plans using a single typewriter to being Alberta's largest health benefits provider, we've come a long way in 75 years. And through that time, we've had an enduring commitment to the communities we serve. We appreciate the trust that has been placed in Alberta Blue Cross, and our promise is to continue to earn this trust through the active role we play in our communities.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



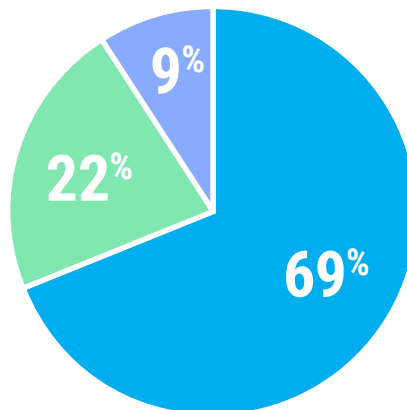
GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING



REDUCED INEQUALITIES



QUALITY EDUCATION





From our humble beginnings of typing up plans using a single typewriter to being Alberta's largest health benefits provider, we've come a long way in 75 years.

Source: Alberta Blue Cross 40th year anniversary supplement publication in Alberta Report, 1988.





Structure & strategy

The ABC Benefits Corporation Foundation

Funding for community involvement is provided through the ABC Benefits Corporation Foundation, drawing upon interest from \$15 million in endowments from Alberta Blue Cross.

- Created in 1998 in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of Alberta Blue Cross.
- Foundation is overseen by an independent volunteer Board of Directors.
- Provides Alberta Blue Cross with a mechanism to support community engagement on a sustainable basis with funds that otherwise may not be available.

We align our community impact initiatives in fulfillment of our social purpose strategy with the UN Sustainable Development Goals of Good Health and Wellbeing, Quality Education and Reduced Inequalities.

Board of Directors

The ABC Benefits Corporation Foundation

RAY PISANI
Board chair

SHARON CARRY
Director

ROBERT CARWELL
Director

TANYA OLIVER
Director

SCOTT THON
Director

MARK KOMLENIC
Director

Where our impact begins

HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROMOTION

Activities undertaken in the interest of fulfilling our purpose and legislative mandate including leading and supporting province-wide health and wellness initiatives focused on the following areas:

- Supporting those facing chronic health challenges with access to health and wellness resources and services.
- Supporting intergenerational wellbeing and socio-economic equity through access to post-secondary education.
- Empowering youth in building foundational healthy habits.
- Supporting seniors in maintaining lifelong wellness.
- Supporting families and communities through community vibrancy and access to active living.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Activities undertaken in the interest of corporate citizenship and for the betterment of the community at large with a focus on the following:

- Employee citizenship and volunteerism.
- Ongoing initiatives to reduce our environmental footprint.
- Advancing diversity, equity and inclusion within our organization and our communities.
- Living our commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

OUR SOCIAL PURPOSE

Social purpose defines an organization's reason for existence, beyond its products or services. It serves as the core connecting point for an organization's vision, mission, values and strategies. By keeping our social purpose—empowering people to live their best life—at the centre of our work, we are truly serving Albertans in the most meaningful way possible.

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Programs

A legacy of building communities

We're passionate about the places we live and the people we serve. For the past 75 years, we've walked alongside Albertans to create healthy and accessible communities where everyone can live, work, learn and play. Through our community programs, we strive to help Albertans access the supports they need to live well.

BUILT TOGETHER PROGRAM

We promote wellness through our popular Built Together grant program by helping Albertans build spaces for active living in their communities. Since introducing the program in 2013 and with total funding exceeding \$2.4 million, we have supported more than 45 infrastructure projects across the province ranging from sports courts, outdoor gyms and playgrounds to bike and skateparks. Each year, we award \$50,000 grants to projects in Edmonton, Calgary, a secondary city, a rural community and an Indigenous community.

In 2023, we received 102 applications, nearly a third of which heard about Built Together through word of mouth. After much deliberation, we were proud to award grants to the following projects:

- An inclusive playground for Kensington School in Edmonton.
- An accessible playground for St. Stephen School in Calgary.
- An accessible playground for Good Shepherd School in Peace River.
- An outdoor multisports court at Aurora Middle School in Lac La Biche.
- An outdoor ice rink for Alexander First Nation.



We are very thankful to be recipients of the Alberta Blue Cross Built Together grant. Receiving these funds will allow us to make our dream a reality. Thank you, Alberta Blue Cross, for your invaluable contribution to accessible play in the Peace River region!

Jacqueline Bennis, on behalf of the Friends of the Shepherd Society



In its 63 years of existence, Kensington School has never had a playground.

Its 400 students not only come from a range of cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds, but they also live with various cognitive, social, sensory or physical disabilities. For decades, Kensington School has been trying to gather the funds necessary to build an inclusive playground where children with diverse abilities can play without barriers. Alberta Blue Cross is thrilled to push them over the financial finish line and help them realize their dream.

“We are so excited and grateful to have been chosen by Alberta Blue Cross for their Built Together grant program,” says Monica Marchand of the Kensington Parent Association. “Not only will this greatly benefit the school children, but with this being a fully inclusive playground, we will be able to support children of all abilities in the community.”



The Community Wellbeing grant program provided 75 awards of \$1,000 each to volunteers across the province who are champions for the physical, mental and social wellbeing of their communities, along with matching donations to the organizations they volunteer with.



There is no better feeling than knowing that you helped someone navigate a difficult time in their lives.

My volunteer work fills my heart with warmth and a sense of purpose.

Alex Duica, volunteer with Helping Families Handle Cancer Foundation, recipient of the Community Wellbeing grant program

COMMUNITY WELLBEING GRANT PROGRAM

Our lives are made better by the thousands of volunteers across Alberta who spend their time creating brighter, thriving communities. We believe these volunteers deserve to be celebrated. To celebrate Alberta Blue Cross's legacy of giving back to the communities we serve in conjunction with our 75th anniversary, we created the Community Wellbeing grant program. The Community Wellbeing grant program provided 75 awards of \$1,000 each to volunteers across the province who are champions for the physical, mental and social wellbeing of their communities, along with matching donations to the organizations they volunteer with.

We received a staggering 277 applications for this program, with nominations coming in from all corners of the province. Our finalists were from a variety of organizations and causes including the Edmonton Food Bank, Cold Lake Pride, Wheatland Society of the Arts, Sage

Seniors Society, Lethbridge Therapeutic Riding Association, Hospice Calgary Society and many more. In total, we distributed \$150,000 in funds to 75 volunteers and 75 organizations across Alberta.

The number of recipients per region were as follows:

- Edmonton: 21
- Calgary: 10
- Fort McMurray: 2
- Grande Prairie: 1
- Lethbridge: 4
- Medicine Hat: 1
- Red Deer: 2
- Central Alberta: 12
- Northern Alberta: 8
- Southern Alberta: 12

We're proud to support the important work of these volunteers and organizations.

Our third annual Faces of Wellness campaign continued to recognize Albertans who are everyday champions for wellness in their own lives, workplaces and communities.

FACES OF WELLNESS

Our third annual Faces of Wellness campaign continued to recognize Albertans who are everyday champions for wellness in their own lives, workplaces and communities. Whether that's making positive lifestyle changes, promoting a health-related cause, making the most of life while living with a chronic condition, standing up for mental health or being a role model for others, this campaign asks Albertans to nominate individuals or themselves to be one of our next Faces of Wellness.

In 2023, we received 223 submissions from across Alberta. Of these, 60 were recognized as runners up, 10 were awarded as finalists and 1 was recognized as our grand prize recipient.

Some of our 2023 finalists include the following:

- Dr. Kimberly Kluthe, an acupuncturist and manual osteopathic therapist who lives with endometriosis and Hashimoto's disease, an autoimmune disorder. She uses her own experiences to inspire and support others facing similar challenges.
- Evan James Mudryk, a man who couldn't speak, eat or walk after a major stroke, but regained his mobility after 11 months of therapy. He now shares his story as a guest lecturer at the University of Alberta and through his YouTube channel, "Stroke How To."
- Cyndie McOuat, a breast cancer survivor who found sistership through dragon boat racing. She was the CIBC Run for the Cure survivor spokesperson in 2019 and now volunteers with many cancer organizations while sharing her personal experience with breast cancer.
- Michelle Williscroft, the founder of the Fox Creek Nordic and Trail Club, who helped raise more than \$1 million by applying for grants and creating keynote presentations. Thanks to her hard work, members of her community can now enjoy a system of bike trails and a bike park.

Every inspiring story can be found at facesofwellness.ca.



Meet our 2023 Faces of Wellness grand prize recipient, **Ufuoma Muwheh**

Ufuoma Muwheh lived with sickle cell disease for 18 years. After a bone marrow transplant, she was cured but wanted to help others with sickle cell disease. Ufuoma created NotJustYou, a nonprofit sickle cell support organization that provides a platform for individuals to connect, share experiences and access support. She's a strong advocate for Black health and enhancing health care for marginalized communities, and she uses her diverse education and research in biological sciences and psychology to continue learning about sickle cell disease.





Partnerships

A legacy of building trust

Since the day we opened our doors, we've made it our mandate to support the health and wellbeing of Albertans. We can't do this alone, so we work hand in hand with dozens of organizations across the province to share resources, research and support. That's 75 years of building trust with each other and the people we care about most—Albertans trying to live well.

We build trust by **creating community**

Community is at the heart of everything we do. Throughout 2023, we worked with our partners to help create healthy, vibrant communities and community spaces where people can come together. From our sponsorship of the Citadel Theatre's Pay-What-You-Choose events to our 20 years of supporting STARS as they fly life-saving missions to rural areas, we believe there are many ways to support our community.

One of our main undertakings each year is the Healthy Communities Symposium, led by our partners at Communities ChooseWell and the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association. This marked our fourth year of supporting the Healthy Communities Symposium. Over 2 days, 125 wellness leaders from across the province came together to build upon their current community resources and promote wellness in their communities.



The theme for the 2023 symposium was “Honouring Our Roots, Building Our Future.” Attendees heard a variety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives on Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL). Attendees were encouraged to launch, continue or evolve HEAL initiatives in their communities through the lens of diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Healthy Communities Symposium inspires and strengthens community connections to wellness in Alberta. It’s a unique learning opportunity that inspires change at a grassroots, organizational and systems level. We’re honoured to be a partner in this event and excited to see what wellness initiatives it sparks in the future.



We build trust by **breaking barriers**

Every human being has the right to live with dignity and be treated with equity. We stand as a champion for diversity, equity and inclusion, and we partner with organizations doing important work to uplift others.

As an ally of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, we supported both the Edmonton Pride Festival and Calgary Pride Festival in 2023. We also celebrated Pride Month with our own team members in June, which included an all-employee panel sharing personal stories of navigating the world as 2SLGBTQ+ people.

We continued to champion women's health and wellness through a variety of initiatives, including the United Way's Period Promise campaign, which works to address period poverty through promoting equitable access to menstrual products. We also continued our work with the Lois Hole Women's Hospital Society by presenting a series of Between Us talks, which focus on providing a safe and inclusive environment to share knowledge, listen to experts and discuss important women's health topics. More than 1,845 participants joined us for these interactive discussions, which covered topics such as urinary tract infections and infertility.

We stand as a champion for diversity, equity and inclusion, and we partner with organizations doing important work to uplift others.



In 2023, we were nominated for The United Way's Red Tie Awards for our work with its Period Promise campaign. The Period Promise works to normalize menstruation and reduce the financial barrier many people face when purchasing period products. Among people who menstruate,

- 25 per cent struggle to afford products;
- 34 per cent often or occasionally make budget sacrifices to afford menstrual products; and
- 70 per cent have missed social activities, school or work because of their period.

We build trust by **feeding families**

Food is a basic human right, and access to nutritious food is critically important to both physical and mental health. With grocery prices on the rise and more than 1 in 10 Alberta households experiencing food insecurity, we make it a priority to partner with organizations who make sure the people in our communities have enough to eat.

Throughout 2023, we maintained our partnership with Fresh Routes, a not-for-profit organization in Calgary that delivers discounted healthy food directly to low socio-economic status communities. We work with Fresh Routes by sponsoring 7 community stops in and around Calgary and 3 stops in the surrounding Indigenous communities of the Stoney Nakoda, Piikani and Siksika Nations, helping the nearly 13,000 households that Fresh Routes serves.

We also work to make sure kids can access the food they need to get through their days. We achieve this through our work as a snack sponsor for Free Play for Kids, an after-school multi-sports program for 8- to 12-year-olds, and as a partner of Apple Schools, an organization that provides wellness programming to schools across Alberta.



In 2023, we supported more than 30,000 students across Alberta in 93 underserved schools. Students who participated in Apple Schools programming saw a 35 per cent increase in their physical activity and a 10 per cent increase in fruits and vegetables consumed.



We build trust by **uplifting youth**

We want children to grow up strong, healthy and empowered. That's why we partner with organizations across the province who give kids and teens the tools they need to succeed. We also promote wellness in Alberta schools through initiatives that impact 10s of thousands of students in hundreds of schools across Alberta including in Indigenous communities.

In 2023, we sponsored the following programs:

- The Alberta Medical Association Youth Run Club, which is active in hundreds of schools across Alberta and supports upwards of 26,000 participants.
- Free Play for Kids, an initiative that provides after-school sports opportunities for disadvantaged children. More than 24 schools participated in this program in 2023. We provided more than 35,000 free snacks to 506 kids 5 times a week for the entire year.
- Apple Schools, an organization that provides wellness programming in more than 90 schools across Alberta. Children in Apple Schools practice mindfulness, take part in ongoing physical activity and enjoy nourishing snacks to fuel their minds and bodies.

- The Lung Association’s Breathe Smart program to educate children on the risks of vaping and youth smoking. In 2023, we helped deliver sessions to 44 schools and more than 2,000 students.
- NSTEP, whose mission is to educate and motivate children to eat better, walk more and live longer through hands-on nutrition and physical activity education to children, teachers and families across the province. NSTEP positively impacted 4,000 Alberta children and youth in 2023.
- SOS Youth Day, a free event showcasing social organizations and businesses that help uplift youth through education and support services.
- Northern Alberta International Children’s Festival, which exhibits children’s arts and cultural experiences in a way that removes barriers, fosters joy, sparks creativity and inspires the next generation of artists and art lovers.
- Still I Rise ᑭᐱᑭᑦᑲᑦ Indigenous youth summit, which engages students from all over Alberta to participate in a full-day session focused on the importance of physical activity, mental health and wellbeing. More than 1,600 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students joined virtually to hear Indigenous Elders share their wisdom.
- Alberta Indigenous Games—Youth, which brings together Indigenous youth from across Alberta to engage in 10 days of 16 competitive sports, traditional games, special events, education and cultural connection. More than 5,000 youth participated in the 2023 games.

We also actively promote youth mental health through initiatives like our ongoing sponsorship of the MoreGoodDays program, which delivers daily text messages of advice, support and inspiration. Additionally, many of the grants from our Built Together and Community Wellbeing grant programs are put toward youth-focused programs, services and infrastructure.



One of the best parts was getting to hang out with other Indigenous students from our school. It felt like we were building our own little community, and it was awesome.

The biggest takeaway was that there are so many opportunities out there for us. This conference made me realize that if we really set our minds to something, we can achieve it, just like all the speakers said. Whether it’s art or running your own business, or doing something totally different, it’s all possible.

Parkview Indigenous grade 9 student on the “Still I Rise” summit

We build trust by **promoting physical wellbeing**

We believe in prevention before treatment wherever possible. That's why we partner with organizations who believe the path to health and wellness is through educating our communities and removing systemic barriers.

Through 2023, we continued our sponsorship of the Prescription to Get Active program, which works to break down roadblocks that keep people from physical activity. Prescription to Get Active currently works with more than 800 clinics across Alberta, providing physicians and health care teams with tools to educate and support their patients on the importance of physical activity. These clinics can also provide prescriptions for activity, valid at dozens of recreational and fitness facilities across the province.

Our focus on preventative care also led to us sponsoring The Prostate Cancer Centre's Man Van, the first mobile men's health clinic in Canada. The Man Van offers Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) blood tests to help detect prostate cancer, as well as mental wellness assessments.

We supported the Man Van clinics in Red Deer and Medicine Hat, which tested more than 150 men.

Our work with The Man Van and our team members' ongoing support for Movember are just 2 of the ways we support men's health, often called "the silent crisis."

- *1 in 6 Alberta men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer.*
- *There are 2,700 new cases of prostate cancer in Alberta every year, and prostate cancer claimed the lives of 450 Alberta men last year alone.*
- *Prostate cancer is the leading form of cancer diagnosed in Canadian men, but 100 per cent of prostate cancer cases are treatable if caught early.*
- *Men of Indigenous or African ethnicity have twice the rate of prostate cancer as Caucasian men.*

We've been a proud sponsor of STARS for more than 20 years. In addition to its accident and trauma response work, STARS is also vital in transporting patients between rural hospitals and larger hospitals. In 2023, we continued our support of STARS by sponsoring 3 Fund-A-Flight missions, 1 each in northern Alberta, central Alberta and southern Alberta.

We also sponsored the Parkinson's Association of Alberta Hope Conference in November 2023. This full-day event was filled with meaningful, informative and educational presentations delivered by top researchers, specialists and clinicians.

We build trust by **empowering older adults**

Wellbeing is important at any age, and we want to empower adults to stay healthy and well as they age. As part of our support for Alberta's aging-in-place strategy, we partner with several programs and organizations that promote the wellbeing of older adults.

In August 2023, we sponsored the Alberta 55 plus summer games in Brooks. The Alberta 55 plus games promote sports and recreation development for all Albertans 55 years of age and older. From August 17 to 20, more than 1,000 participants competed in 15 events, which included various sports, lawn games, card games, crafts and photography.

In response to high demand, we partnered again with the Alberta Injury Prevention Centre to print, promote and distribute the Keeping Well booklet across the province. This practical resource offers older adults the information and tools they need to regain or stabilize their

strength and balance, decrease their risk of a fall and increase their overall health and wellness. We've distributed more than 33,000 booklets across Alberta.

In October, Alberta Blue Cross was pleased to sponsor the first Alberta Healthy Aging Summit that saw more than 300 seniors' health champions come together towards a united purpose of making Alberta one of the best places to grow older through the coordination and integration of community-based services.

Finally, we were proud to sponsor the Top 7 Over 70 in Calgary, a biennial awards program that recognizes and celebrates the accomplishments of older adults. The Top 7 Over 70 winners are achieving remarkable success in everything from entrepreneurship to sports to philanthropy, and they're living proof that wellness can continue—or start—at any age.



The accomplishments of these individuals are truly inspirational. They are making a difference in our community every day and contributing to our economic and social fabric in a myriad of ways.

Monica Zurowski, Top 7 Over 70 chair

From partnerships to pilot programs, we spent 2023 advancing our commitment to make mental health care more accessible.

We build trust by **supporting mental health**

Mental health remains a top priority for Alberta Blue Cross, and we're committed to ongoing efforts to raise awareness around its importance. From partnerships to pilot programs, we spent 2023 advancing our commitment to make mental health care more accessible.

Every year, we support National Depression Screening Day (NDSD) in October, and we sponsored the 2023 initiative through the Calgary Counselling Centre. From October 2 to 8, we encouraged Albertans to check in with their mental health and take small, manageable steps to feel better. Participants could use an online tool that screens for signs of depression and encourages those displaying symptoms to seek help. Approximately 6,175 people took the screening, an increase of more than 120 per cent compared to 2022, and Alberta made up 73 per cent of the participants.

Also among our involvements was partnering with YWCA Edmonton to help provide mental health counselling services. Demand for mental health support continues to grow, and we've adapted to make that support more accessible to marginalized demographics. By delivering mental health services via a barrier-reduced, trauma-informed model of care, we can lessen the impact that societal inequities have on mental health. In total, we helped 340 clients attend 4,422 counselling sessions at YWCA Edmonton in 2023, 99 per cent of which were fully or partially subsidized.

We build trust by **standing with Indigenous Peoples**

We live and work on Treaty 6, 7 and 8, and we respect the Indigenous Peoples whose land we walk on. Our involvements are guided by our Indigenous Pathway, which is overseen by a steering committee that includes representation from leaders in the Métis and Indigenous communities of Alberta.

In 2023, Edmonton hosted the Alberta Indigenous Games for adults, which was attended by more than 1,000 athletes. The games were developed as a way for Indigenous adults who struggle with mental health issues to channel their energy toward sports and friendly competition. Alberta Blue Cross sponsored these games as they respond to the health inequity faced by Indigenous communities and honour our commitment in moving forward toward Reconciliation.

We also sponsored the Circle of Courage Awards, presented to Alberta Indigenous Games athletes who demonstrate exceptional service and performance in their sport while showing a continuous willingness to volunteer.

As well, we partnered with the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association to sponsor Grandmothers' Circles events. The Grandmothers' Circles provide Indigenous women Elders from multiple nations the space to come together and share women's teachings and traditions that have been passed down to them in an oral setting. We helped promote events for both National Indigenous Peoples Day and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.



The Alberta Indigenous Games bring together sport and thought, tradition and innovation, individuals and community, history and the present moment, heart and soul. The event facilitates physical development and emotional growth, friendly competition and cooperative effort, just the right combination to promote healing of the body-mind.

Dr. Gabor Maté, M.D., physician and author

Meanwhile, we are proud to be a founding sponsor of the Keep Tobacco Sacred Collaboration. This community-based initiative honours tobacco as a sacred plant and a gift given by the Creator to Indigenous Peoples. Commercial tobacco products, such as cigarettes, spit tobacco and nicotine vaping products, are not sacred and can cause great harm.

We actively work with communities to connect Elders, Knowledge Keepers and youth in sharing the cultural significance of this sacred plant and reducing the use of commercial tobacco. In 2023, Alberta Blue Cross was honoured to be presented with an Eagle feather from Indigenous Elder and Knowledge Keeper Treffrey Deerfoot on behalf of the Keep Tobacco Sacred Collaboration, in recognition of our commitment to this initiative.



We sponsored the Circle of Courage Awards, presented to athletes who demonstrate exceptional service and performance in their sport while showing a continuous willingness to volunteer.





Scholarships

A legacy of building bridges

Post-secondary education helps youth on the path towards better lives, which improves the health and wellness of communities overall. Through our scholarship program, we are committed to bridging the financial gap that prevents many students from moving on to post-secondary studies.

Our scholarship program supports more than 80 awards each year for full-time students based on academic achievement and financial need. The awards are administered directly through accredited post-secondary institutions across the province.

Through our Indigenous scholarship program, we work to address the education inequity faced by Indigenous Peoples in Alberta by making post-secondary studies more financially accessible. These 9 \$1,500 awards are based on scholastic achievement, financial need and community involvement. Scholarship recipients are selected by an external committee with expertise in academia and Indigenous education. In 2023, we awarded 3 scholarships to Indigenous students who were completing their high school education and entering their first year of post-secondary study, as well as 6 scholarships to mature students entering their first year of post-secondary education.

Meet **Morgan Chalifoux**, one of our 2023 Indigenous scholarship recipients

Morgan Chalifoux is a mother of 4, a proud Indigenous woman, a leader in her community and a social work student at Norquest College. Morgan has faced many barriers and stigmas in her life, but she's never given up her right to make her voice heard. Now, she's helping other people find their voice too.

Morgan's passion for social work didn't begin with her formal education. She grew up with the effects of the residential school system, and those personal experiences led her to working with some of the most marginalized people in Edmonton's inner city, particularly women. During that time, Morgan saw doors that should have been open stay closed to people like her. She spent 10 years on the frontlines fighting for those doors to open before taking a step back to recuperate and focus on her personal life.

"I really looked at myself and my life and where I was at," says Morgan. "I didn't want to go backwards, and after doing that for so long and seeing those effects and seeing the barriers ... it led me to go back to school."

After some time for rest and self-reflection, Morgan decided to apply for the social work program at Norquest College so she could do more for her community. This was during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and as Morgan spent more time online for school, she started to look for more resources online that could help her.

"I found out about [the Alberta Blue Cross Indigenous scholarship program] on social media," Morgan recalls. "This scholarship meant the world to me. It made it possible and it made it easier to continue my studies ...



it was one less piece of the puzzle I had to worry about."

Because Alberta Blue Cross doesn't dictate how the scholarship money has to be used, Morgan found a bit more breathing room knowing it could go towards rent, groceries or tuition. She found balance between her schoolwork, motherhood and community involvement. And she has big plans for the future, which include finishing her social work diploma, earning her bachelor's degree and eventually getting a doctorate.

"My dream is to continue to practice in my field, to be a social worker, but also to carry my Indigenous culture and practices and work together as one," says Morgan. "I think I can make a really big impact, especially being an Indigenous woman. There's not a lot of us who have that opportunity ... I wish there was. I just hope that I will be able to find support, find the people who believe in me and find the people who will give me that opportunity."





Environmental commitments

Environmental commitments

At Alberta Blue Cross, being accountable to the communities we serve also means being cognizant of our impact on the environment and taking measurable actions to manage and minimize our environmental impact.

As we have continued our focus on business process automation and digitization, this effort has substantially reduced our environmental footprint. We continue to focus on encouraging both customers and health service providers to submit claims to us online—with amazing results. Almost 99 per cent of our claims are now submitted online, with most processed in real-time. This not only provides greater convenience to our customers and service providers, but reduces the consumption of paper, eliminating 10s of thousands of paper claim forms each year.

Beyond business process automation and digitization, we are committed to minimizing our environment impact. This includes ongoing energy efficiency enhancements to our facilities, as well as a pervasive focus on waste reduction and recycling. In 2023, we recycled more than 9 tonnes of materials that otherwise would have end up in the landfill including not only cardboard and plastic but aluminum and glass products. Meanwhile, our confidential paper recycling program diverted over 7,000 kilograms of paper for reuse.

Looking ahead, we are in the midst of developing an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) framework for Alberta Blue Cross through which we will further advance our commitments to environmentally sustainable business practices.



99%
OF CLAIMS
SUBMITTED ONLINE



More than
9 tonnes
OF MATERIALS
RECYCLED IN 2023



ESG
framework
being developed



**10s of
thousands**
of paper claim forms eliminated



**CONFIDENTIAL PAPER
RECYCLING PROGRAM DIVERTED**
7,000 kg
of paper for reuse





Our
ambassadors



At Alberta Blue Cross,
our team members are
true champions for our
communities.

A legacy of building champions

At Alberta Blue Cross, our team members are true champions for our communities. We work with people who share our passion for making a positive difference in the communities we serve and play an active role in our community involvements.

CHAMPIONING THE EMPLOYEE GIVING CAMPAIGN

In the fall of 2023, our team members came together for our annual employee giving campaign, which provides our team members with greater personal choice in giving while being more inclusive of their differing interests and priorities. Through the employee giving campaign, Alberta Blue Cross matches funding to each individual donation up to \$100, which goes directly to the charitable organization of an employee's choice.

From October 5 to November 30, 2023, our team members raised \$39,724.38 for 86 different charitable organizations. This included more than \$23,000 in team member donations to organizations through the employee giving campaign, with more than \$16,000 being matched by our community foundation.

We also continued working with our employee giving advisory committee who provides year-round input and support for the charitable work led by our team members. Along with our annual employee giving campaign, this includes our monthly Caring for a Cause event and other employee-led giving initiatives.

CHAMPIONING OUR HEARTS OF BLUE TEAM

Throughout 2023, our Hearts of Blue employee-led charity continued to support dozens of grassroots organizations across Alberta by volunteering their time and donating needed items. We also provide an annual match of employee donations to Hearts of Blue through our community foundation. The organizations we support range from homeless and women's shelters to organizations that support children and Indigenous communities.

2023 was an extremely busy year for Hearts of Blue. Our donations totalled more than \$75,000 and helped 45 different organizations across Alberta. Our 2023 donations included the following:

- In January, we donated baby supplies to the Calgary chapter of Mamas for Mamas, a national charitable organization that supports mothers and caregivers in crisis. The supplies will be given to those who are raising children while facing poverty-related struggles.
- In April, we donated transit tickets to Recovery Acres, an Edmonton-based residential addiction treatment facility in a safe and sober living environment for men who are motivated to change. The transit tickets will allow residents easier access to appointments and other services only available outside of the facility.
- In July, our team members delivered a \$2,000 donation to Peak Vocational and Support Services Ltd. to build a wheelchair-accessible community garden. This garden helps their clients offset the cost of food and teaches them how to maintain and grow fruits and vegetables.
- In November, Edmonton and Calgary team members worked with their cities' Homes for Heroes chapters to deliver care packages to veterans moving into their new homes after experiencing homelessness. Homes for Heroes provides veterans in crisis with housing, resources, services and training that helps them successfully transition back into civilian life.
- In December, we donated an upright freezer to the Centre of Hope in Fort McMurray, which will help them save perishable donated food items. The Centre of Hope helps those who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness in Fort McMurray.



Thank you again for this wonderful donation.

It will impact our ability to freeze donated food items and to purchase healthier frozen foods for our patrons. The freezer is filled with bread and bagels, which is fantastic, as we didn't have this ability prior to owning this freezer to keep bread products.

Tracy Shulko, fund development and communication coordinator, Centre of Hope.



Recognized for our commitment to our communities

While our community engagement initiatives focus on quantifiable impacts and outcomes, and we assess impact and best practices through both our work in collaboration with the London Benchmarking Group and each of the organizations we support, it is also gratifying to have the impact of our work recognized externally. In November 2023, Alberta Blue Cross was honoured to be recognized with 2 awards in the Health category at the National Philanthropy Day awards event. The first award was based on a nomination from the Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation in recognition of our support for the very successful Between Us health talks series and our involvement in the Alberta Women's Health Foundation's women's health awareness campaign. The second award resulted from a nomination by the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region for our support in launching the Alberta Period Promise campaign to advance equitable access to menstrual products.

About us

Alberta Blue Cross is the largest benefits provider in Alberta and one of the largest in Western Canada.

We serve more than 1.8 million members with coverage through more than 5,700 small and large employer group plans, individual plans and government-sponsored programs. In 2023, Alberta Blue Cross processed more than 77.2 million claim lines with a value exceeding \$3.8 billion.

Alberta-based and Alberta-grown, we provide health and wellness plans, programs and services on a viable, not-for-profit basis for the financial protection and wellbeing of our communities.





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