



NEWS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Alberta Blue Cross supports Alberta’s rural and remote communities through COVID-19 in partnership with the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA)

Alberta Blue Cross and the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) have now opened the COVID Community Roots Program—a program offering grants up to \$5,000 for grassroots community-led initiatives serving vulnerable populations during COVID-19. The program will target areas outside of Edmonton and Calgary to help ensure quality support services run in rural, remote and secondary communities.

“This program is about acknowledging that all communities are not the same. We may all be weathering the same storm, but we are not in the same boat,” says Brian Geislinger, Vice-President, Corporate Relations at Alberta Blue Cross. “This program will empower community members with the resources to address the specific barriers they are facing in serving vulnerable populations. We know with the right tools, we have the ability to support meaningful impact in how communities adjust and navigate the changes brought on by COVID-19.”

Organizations eligible to apply include non-profits, charities, municipalities, First Nations communities and Metis Settlements. Unregistered organizations may apply with a partner organization. Initiatives must address the mental, physical, social and emotional well-being of those most affected by COVID-19. Interested organizations can find more information and apply online at [ab.bluecross.ca/aboutus/community-roots](http://ab.bluecross.ca/aboutus/community-roots).

Alberta Blue Cross, ARPA and Communities Choosewell have partnered together to create this program. As organizations that are focused on wellness, this program was created in response to the changing definition of wellness since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"During this COVID-19 crisis, we see people coming together everywhere to help out those impacted the most. It is the smaller and remote communities, however, that need our attention now. Many of these communities are already dealing with resource gaps—whether it's people or funding—and it is here that we'll see the true spirit of community shine through if supported properly," says Janet Naclia, Programs Manager at ARPA.

The COVID Community Roots Program is part of Alberta Blue Cross’s \$500,000 community support commitment to COVID-19 relief efforts, announced in April. It is funded through the organization’s community foundation. As a locally based, not-for-profit organization, Alberta Blue Cross has a unique focus on supporting the health and wellness of its customers and all Albertans. It is ranked as one of Alberta’s Top 10 Most Loved Brands, as well as one of Alberta's Top 25 Most Respected Organizations.

The Alberta Recreation and Parks Association is a not-for-profit organization committed to building healthier and happier communities and citizens by developing and promoting recreation and parks

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### For more information, please contact

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