



MEDIA RELEASE

**For immediate release
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**Alberta Blue Cross encourages Albertans
to ‘buy local’ this holiday season**

With the holiday season approaching, many Albertans are getting started on gift shopping—and more are turning to online shopping platforms as shopping from home has gained prominence during the pandemic. But this season, it’s more important than ever to support the financial health of our local communities by buying local wherever possible. Most local businesses have been struck hard by the double blow of COVID-19 and low oil and gas prices, and without support many local businesses won’t survive.

“While Alberta Blue Cross is best known for health benefits, we’re also an advocate for wellness—and we know that financial wellness is top-of-mind for Albertans right now,” says Brian Geislinger, Vice-President of Corporate Relations with Alberta Blue Cross. “Doing what we can to collectively support the financial wellbeing of our communities helps everyone as we get through this challenging time together.”

Shopping locally keeps dollars circulating in your local community—which directly benefits your local economy, and in turns benefits everyone.

“At Alberta Blue Cross, we believe in leading by example,” says Geislinger. The Alberta-based organization employs more than 1,100 Albertans across the province, pays local taxes, and spends millions of dollars each year on products and services purchased within the province.

As a champion for Alberta businesses, Alberta Blue Cross provides group benefits to more than 5,000 employers across the province and recently sponsored the Alberta Chambers of Commerce’s 2020 Business Awards of Distinction and Small Business Week.

“Local businesses play a huge role in supporting our communities, but right now they need us to personally give support back to them,” says Geislinger. “The faces behind local businesses are our neighbours, our friends and our family members—and now is the time for us to show we appreciate them by stepping up and buying local.”

So how to safely buy local in the midst of COVID-19? First and foremost, Alberta Blue Cross advises Albertans to follow all AHS and municipal guidelines, to wear a mask and use hand sanitizer when heading out, and to follow all business protocols such as social distancing requirements. Call ahead if you are looking

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for a particular item (or visit your local business's web site); ask about delivery and pick-up options; and consider locally made products, arts and crafts, or gift cards for local services.

What are some ways you can buy local? If you're looking for a food gift basket, consider buying a gift basket of "made-in-Alberta" products assembled locally or purchased from your local grocery store. If you are looking to buy clothing, consider buying Alberta-made apparel. If you are purchasing spirits, consider products from one of Alberta's many local breweries or distilleries. Or if you are looking to buy an item such as a coffee maker, purchase it from your local hardware store instead of buying online.

"Each of us as individuals can collectively have a huge impact by supporting our local businesses and our local economies," says Geislinger. "We're all in this together."

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For more information, please contact Kayla Sommer, Communications Officer at ksommer@ab.bluecross.ca.



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