

## NEWS RELEASE

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## Alberta Blue Cross® delivers support for targeted food security efforts

In the spirit of supporting Albertans in need through the holiday season, this week Alberta Blue Cross is stepping up with a \$75,000 donation from its community foundation to support the work of organizations advancing targeted food security efforts. Through the pandemic, we have seen organizations across Alberta come together to address priority community needs—particularly among vulnerable and at-risk populations.

The donation is part of a \$500,000 commitment that the organization announced earlier this year to help Albertans who have been particularly hard hit by the economic impact of the pandemic combined with the downturn in energy prices.

“This has been an extremely tough year for many Albertans, and access to food is a critical issue for many individuals and families,” says Brian Geislinger, vice-president of Corporate Relations with Alberta Blue Cross. “Through this challenging time, we remain committed to supporting our customers—and our communities.” To identify organizations through which to direct donations, Alberta Blue Cross consulted with the Edmonton Food Bank, the Edmonton Social Planning Council and the Calgary United Way COVID Relief Committee. As an outcome of this consultation, a recommendation was made to focus investments specifically to address the needs of racialized, immigrant, newcomer and isolated populations.

As such, donations are being allocated through three organizations.

- In Calgary, support is being directed through Umoja Family Mosaic, which has expanded its mandate through the pandemic to become a hub for newcomers and racialized families facing food insecurity. Umoja has begun sending weekly hampers to 500 families with plans to expand further.

“Organizations like ours are best suited to support our newcomer and racialized communities during COVID which is why we have seen such an increase in demand for our services through this difficult time. We know that legacy is not a name on a building. Legacy during this pandemic is changing someone’s life. Had Alberta Blue Cross not called, we would have not even known that Alberta Blue Cross was there for our communities. But they called.”

- Jean Claude Munyezamu, Umoja Community Mosaic

- In Edmonton, support is being directed through the Islamic Family Social Services Association, which was recommended for its strong integration and working relationships with other service providers including the Edmonton Food Bank and Canadian Mental Health Foundation.

“We’ve seen demand for our services rise by more than 40 per cent since March, thousands are coming to us every month for food hampers, counselling, and other supports. Alberta Blue Cross’s

[ab.bluecross.ca](http://ab.bluecross.ca)

Edmonton Blue Cross Place 10009 108 Street NW T5J 3C5 780-498-8000	Calgary Main Floor 715 5 Avenue SW T2P 2X6 403-234-9666	Grande Prairie Suite 108 10126 120 Avenue T8V 8H9 780-532-3505	Lethbridge 470 Chancery Court 220 4 Street S T1J 4J7 403-328-1785	Medicine Hat 95 Carry Drive Plaza 105 Carry Drive SE T1B 3M6 403-529-5553	Red Deer 103 Elements at Rivers Edge 5002 55 Street T4N 7A4 403-343-7009
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support makes a world of difference—it allows us to continue offering essential supports to Albertans, support our team who's been on the frontline day after day and plan beyond the pandemic.”

- Omar Yaqup, executive director and servant of servants at IFSSA

- In rural Alberta, support is being directed through the Alberta Food Banks Association, which has a mission to strengthen the impact of the provincial food bank network by creating new opportunities, increasing knowledge, providing resources, and delivering innovative programs.

“Food Banks Alberta members have seen an increase in the number of clients accessing member food banks across the province, donations such as this allow our rural and remote food banks to have access to the funds to ensure they have the resources necessary to respond to the growing needs of their communities.”

- Stephanie Walsh-Rigby, CEO, Food Banks Alberta

“Alberta Blue Cross has deep roots in the communities we serve,” says Geislinger. “We personally know and feel the challenges that our families, friends, co-workers and neighbours are facing right now, and as the pandemic continues we all need to do what we can to support our fellow Albertans.”

As a locally based, not-for-profit organization, Alberta Blue Cross provides benefits to more than 1.8 million Albertans. Alberta Blue Cross has been ranked as one of Alberta’s Top 10 Most Loved Brands, as well as one of Alberta's Top 25 Most Respected Organizations.

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**For more information please contact**

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