

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Alberta Blue Cross® recognizes inspiring Albertans championing wellness

For the fourth year, Alberta Blue Cross's Faces of Wellness program recognized Albertans who are everyday champions for physical, mental and social wellness in their own lives, workplaces and communities.

This year's grand prize recipient of an all-expense-paid weekend wellness experience in Banff is Zachary Weeks, a committed advocate for disability rights and social justice, who is using his platform to fight ableism and raise awareness about accessibility. Born with cerebral palsy, Zachary has worked as a consultant on significant projects such as the construction of Rogers Place and the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital, ensuring the voices of the differently abled are heard and considered. His work on the City of Edmonton's Accessibility Advisory Committee further illustrates his commitment to building inclusive spaces in his community.

Zachary has earned many awards for his impactful work, including the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and membership on the Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference. Zachary's inspiring efforts have contributed significantly to shaping policies that make our communities safer and more inclusive.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to enjoy such a thoughtful and generous experience in the Rocky Mountains," says Zachary. "It's not often that we take the time to pause and reflect, so this feels particularly special."

Each year, the Faces of Wellness program recognizes Albertans making positive lifestyle changes toward becoming healthier, promoting a health-related cause, making the most of life while living with a chronic condition, advocating for wellness in their workplaces, standing up for mental health or acting as a role model for others.

"In 2024 we received more than 250 nominations for Faces of Wellness from every corner of our province, sharing incredibly diverse and inspiring stories of Albertans' commitments to wellness," says Brian Geislinger, senior vice-president of Corporate Relations and Community Engagement at Alberta Blue Cross.

Of those nominations, 9 finalists were selected and received a \$500 gift card. One of the finalists, Kristofor O'Brien Mahler, is a Canmore resident.

Kristofor is one of Canada's top ski cross athletes. Growing up in Ontario as an active athlete, he started as an alpine racer and played collegiate volleyball, before finding passion in the sport of ski cross and deciding to pursue it full time. Over the past 10 years, Kristofor's commitment to the sport has taken him around the world and resulted in multiple medals, including Junior World Championships and FIS World Cups. His path has not been without obstacles—he



suffered a broken neck injury during a crash in 2023. Throughout his rehabilitation, Kristofor was committed to healing, maintaining social connections and giving back to his community through volunteer coaching hours. Over time, his injury healed and he is now looking forward to representing Canada as a National ski cross athlete, with his sights set on the 2026 Olympics. Kristofor's resilience and courage shows the key to wellness is how you respond to the challenges and setbacks that life may throw at you.

60 other nominees from across Alberta also received wellness-themed prizes for their heartfelt nominations and stories.

Learn more about Alberta Blue Cross's [2024 Faces of Wellness honourees](#).

As Alberta's leading benefit provider, Alberta Blue Cross provides coverage to more than 1.8 million Albertans and administers a wide range of plans for employers and individuals as well as government program sponsors. And as a champion for wellbeing, Alberta Blue Cross leads and supports a wide range of initiatives across the province to promote wellness and active living.

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