

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 those finalists, Ed Storch, is a Mannville resident.

Ed is an athlete who champions physical and mental health, showing that athleticism doesn't have an age limit. Ed began competitive racing at the age of 57, inspired by his 101-year-old mother's involvement in javelin competitions. At 80 years old, Ed now holds numerous national sprinting records and medals and has carved out a space as one of Canada's top senior athletes, often competing in the Canada 55+ Summer Games. His dedication to the sport has



inspired many to realize that it's never too late to pursue their passions. This drive has passed down to his son and grandson, motivating them to pursue running. In addition to staying active on the track, Ed is an active professional knifemaker, blacksmith and instructor. He is also a passionate supporter of a cancer fundraiser, Haying in the 30's, which is near to his own heart as a cancer survivor. Over the years, Ed has inspired others not only through his physical achievements, but also through his contributions to community and commitment to wellness.

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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