

2023 COMMUNITY INVESTMENT REPORT





Land Acknowledgment

Saskatchewan Blue Cross proudly operates on Treaty 2, Treaty 4, Treaty 5, Treaty 6, Treaty 8 and Treaty 10 territories and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and honour Elders and Survivors as we bring awareness to Indian Residential and Day Schools, The Sixties Scoop, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirited. We acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past and we are committed to moving forward in partnership with Indigenous Nations in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration. To acknowledge this territory and its keepers on their traditional terms is to act in reciprocity so that truth may be understood and reconciliation is made possible.

Our story

In 1946, seven Saskatchewan doctors saw a better path in giving equal access to essential healthcare workers. Today, Saskatchewan Blue Cross empowers healthy lives as a local, socially responsible not-for-profit that puts people and communities first.

We deliver exceptional health and wellness, travel and life insurance solutions while creating positive community impact across Saskatchewan.



200,000+
people



1,000+
employers



22+
communities
we employ in

Driven by a mission

to empower communities on their journey to whole health and wellness.

Inspired by a vision

for a future of lifelong health and wellbeing for every person in Saskatchewan.

Our values that form the foundation of who we are:

- We approach people with empathy
- We're ambitious, for ourselves and others
- We're dependable
- We're flexible and disciplined
- We build community, small and large, internally and externally

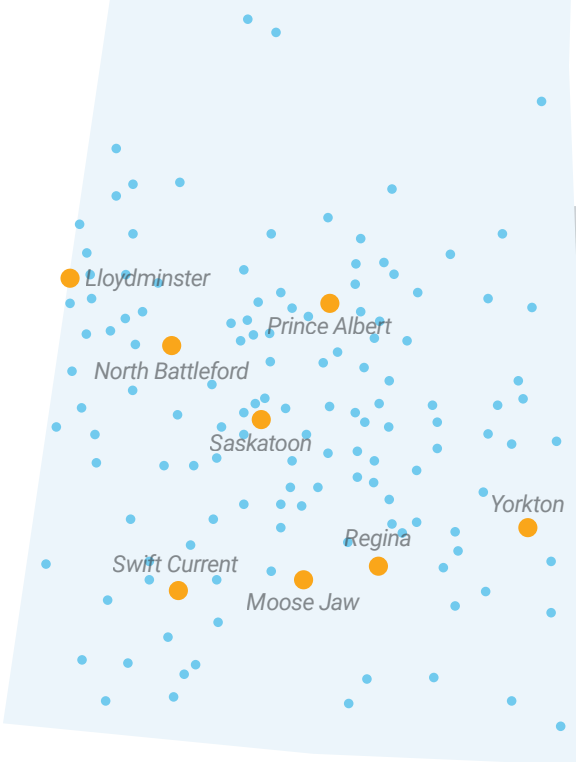
Who we *impact*

How we do it

139
COMMUNITIES
SUPPORTED

Saskatchewan Blue Cross invests in over 139 communities across the province, supporting charitable organizations and events that empower our family, friends, neighbours and communities on their journey to whole health.

IN OUR COMMUNITY



MS Walk



MEGABike for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon



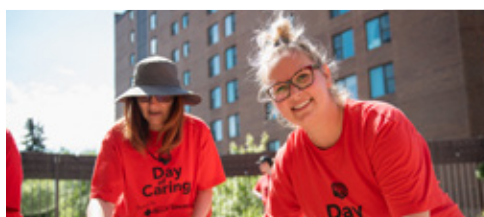
Ronald McDonald House Charities



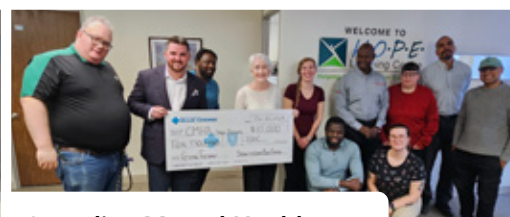
Community Investment award



Enchanted Forest Light Walk



United Way Day of Caring



Canadian Mental Health Association - GivingTuesday

In 2023, Saskatchewan Blue Cross was recognized with the Community Investment SABEX award, highlighting our philanthropic and community sponsorship efforts.

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Saskatchewan Blue Cross is a local, socially responsible not-for-profit organization that puts people and community at the heart of every interaction. Our mission is to “empower our communities on their journey to whole health and wellness.”

We achieve this through the products and experiences we provide and our robust Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) framework, infused into our business decisions. Within our CSR Framework is our award-winning Community Investment Program, driving meaningful outcomes for Saskatchewan’s residents. This program has three main areas of focus:



Health Literacy

Community Health and Wellbeing

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

As we invest in our communities, we’re strengthening local networks and helping people live healthy lives. We work closely with our partner organizations to assess the impact of the programs we support to ensure we embrace best approach in community practices. With the support and passion of our employees and their care and commitment to those we serve, we’ve become known as a leader in community engagement.

I thank all our partners and employees for their incredible work each day to advance the province we call home. I invite you to learn more about the positive impact being made to Saskatchewan by reading through these pages. Together, we are always stronger.

Kelly Wilson
President and CEO
Saskatchewan Blue Cross



Health Literacy

Health Literacy is the “degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.” At Saskatchewan Blue Cross, we envision a future where there is equitable access to health and wellness information for everyone, and each person in Saskatchewan understands how to navigate their healthcare effectively. That can include:

- Knowing where to seek treatment.
- Understanding medications, potential side effects and medication adherence.
- Knowing when and how to seek a second opinion.
- Being confident and comfortable communicating medical needs with healthcare professionals.
- Understanding health information being shared.



In 2023, Saskatchewan Blue Cross conducted a study to understand Saskatchewan residents’ understanding of Health Literacy. This study measured individuals’ confidence in navigating the healthcare system and understanding medical information, among other key areas.

Key survey findings included:

- Two in three Saskatchewan residents struggle with their Health Literacy, but most are not fully aware of the challenges they face.
- 76 per cent overestimate their level of Health Literacy.
- Individuals with lower Health Literacy are less likely to have a positive outlook regarding their health (64 per cent vs. 83 per cent with high Health Literacy) and are less confident in their ability to know when they need to seek help for their health (67 per cent vs. 88 per cent).
- Lower Health Literacy is also linked with lower confidence in the safe use of medications, including knowing the names of one’s medication and what the medication is for, understanding its warning labels and precautions and familiarity with potential side effects.
- While a majority of Saskatchewan residents (53 per cent) feel they are in good health, three in four deal with ongoing health conditions (71 per cent) or have faced health concerns in the past year (75 per cent), indicating widespread need for health support.

In tandem with this study, Saskatchewan Blue Cross conducted a Listening Tour in Southern Saskatchewan with community leaders, healthcare professionals and other influential members across Saskatchewan. Through roundtable discussions, our leaders connected with local stakeholders to listen and learn about what matters to them and their community most as it relates to local health and wellness. Input and feedback received from these sessions and additional community visits taking place in 2024 through central and Northern Saskatchewan will inform considerations as to how we can contribute to making a meaningful local impact in the future through our community investment, products, services and partnerships.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross focuses our Health Literacy program efforts on four key groups of stakeholders, identified both through data and discussions as segments who would benefit from Health Literacy support:

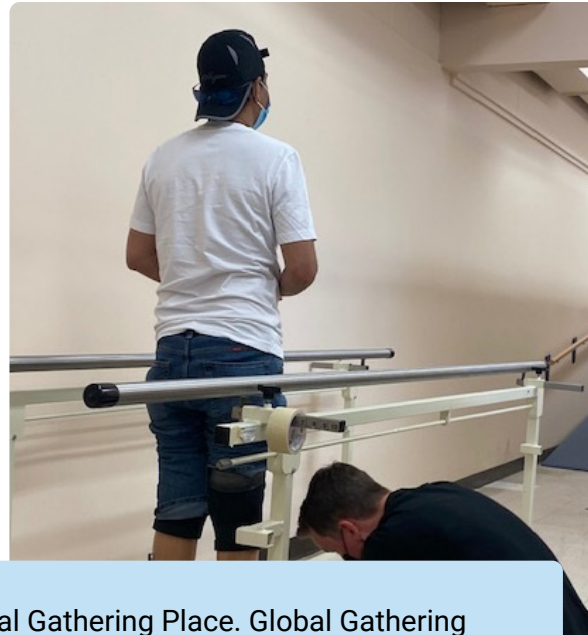
- *Newcomers and new Canadians*
- *Indigenous populations*
- *The actively aging*
- *Youth and educators*

Advancing Health Literacy requires collaboration across a number of sectors and organizations. We’re committed to acting as a catalyst for positive change and creating forums for organizations to work together.



Health Literacy Partnerships

GLOBAL GATHERING PLACE *Newcomers and new Canadians*



Since 2021, Saskatchewan Blue Cross has supported Global Gathering Place. Global Gathering Place has provided refugees and new Canadians settlement assistance and helped Newcomers navigate language, health care, case management, employment, housing and life skills.

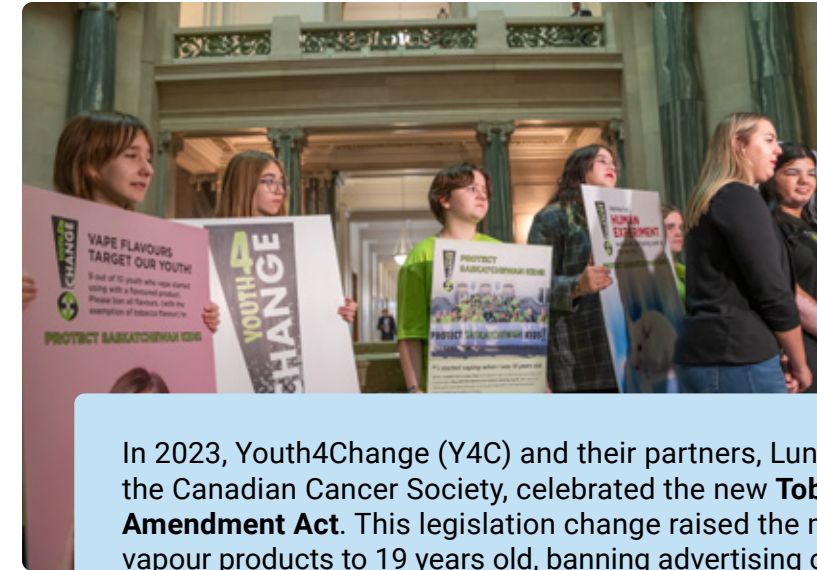
For over 25 years, Global Gathering Place has provided personalized settlement assistance to refugees and immigrants. Their Cultural Health Navigators assist in bridging the gaps within the healthcare system, ensuring a culturally sensitive approach for Newcomers with their Providing Access to Healthcare (PATH) program. The PATH program works with clients one-on-one to help them access health services, navigate and understand the health system and guide them to services and community resources.

“Saskatchewan Blue Cross is an exceptional partner in providing vulnerable Newcomers with access to healthcare. Their support enables us to show up for high needs of Newcomers as they navigate the Saskatchewan healthcare system, eliminating barriers such as transportation, language and lack of knowledge. We are deeply thankful that Saskatchewan Blue Cross not only recognizes the need in our community but also sees that they have a role to play in the solution.”
— Lori Steward, Finance and Operations Manager, Global Gathering Place

80% of clients say they felt a greater sense of belonging after participating in Global Gathering Place programs.

84% of clients reported an increased confidence in English.

84% of clients say they are accessing services and supports that help them accomplish their goals.



LUNG SASKATCHEWAN YOUTH4CHANGE *Youth and educators*

In 2023, Youth4Change (Y4C) and their partners, Lung Saskatchewan, Heart & Stroke and the Canadian Cancer Society, celebrated the new **Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act**. This legislation change raised the minimum age to purchase tobacco or vapour products to 19 years old, banning advertising or promoting tobacco, tobacco-related or vaping products in public places or places where young persons are allowed to be.

Youth4Change is a youth and community-based advocacy and education initiative conducted through a partnership between Lung Saskatchewan, Students Commission of Canada and community partners. The project aims to increase awareness and decrease the uptake of smoking and vaping rates among youth and young adults, specifically in First Nations communities.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross support assists in delivering school presentations, direct support to communities running Y4C programming, social media education and outreach, as well as developing and providing educational resources, training equipment and materials.



“After the advocacy that we did, after the rallies that we held and the recommendations that we sent to the government, you see that they listened to your voices, to your concerns and then they actually created a change. It’s really empowering that we did this, that we can do this, that our voices really matter.”
— Darshana Lanke, Youth4Change member

Over 100+ youth across Saskatchewan provided Y4C training.

Over 450+ youth across Saskatchewan impacted through tobacco and vaping education sessions.

SASKATCHEWAN SENIORS ASSOCIATION INC.

The actively aging

“ In 2023, Saskatchewan Blue Cross sponsored the Saskatchewan Seniors Association Incorporated Convention. This two-day event brought together 36 delegates from 24 rural Saskatchewan seniors’ clubs. Saskatchewan Blue Cross’s support helped ensure registration fees remained affordable for seniors and provided honourariums to presenters at the event.
 – Shannon Wright, Secretary/Treasurer, Saskatchewan Seniors Association ”

This event brought delegates together for Health Literacy presentations, socializing, networking, discussions, resolutions, AGM reports, entertainment and elections.

Presentations included:

- Vitality nutrition
- Digital literacy and connecting older adults
- Osteoporosis Check: a presentation on fall prevention
- Lung Saskatchewan programs and services



SASKATOON COUNCIL ON AGING

The actively aging



In 2023, Saskatchewan Blue Cross expanded our partnerships with Saskatoon Council on Aging to assist them in offering their new Nav-CARE program. This program supports those navigating chronic illness and declining health.

The Nav-CARE program was developed to focus on a personalized, family-centric approach to care. Volunteer navigators play a pivotal role in improving the quality of life for those navigating chronic illnesses.

The building of these relationships works to connect residents to resources, foster independence and enhance their overall wellbeing.

“ We are excited to continue to partner with Saskatchewan Blue Cross for a variety of Health Literacy initiatives for older adults. The Saskatoon Council on Aging Caregiver Information and Support Centre has recognized the critical need for comprehensive support for older adults living at home with chronic illnesses and declining health. The Nav-CARE program aims to address specific needs of individuals in this demographic. The program aims to provide long-term navigation, support and companionship to caregivers, enhancing their overall wellbeing.
 – June Gawdun, Executive Director, Saskatoon Council on Aging ”

Saskatchewan Blue Cross continued to support additional Health Literacy initiatives from Saskatoon Council on Aging, including their Spotlight on Seniors event, Caregiver Information and Support Centres, as well as funding updates to their website. By assisting with these web updates, more relevant and accurate Health Literacy content was made readily available to the general public, in addition to making new resources more easily accessible to Caregivers.

Website update:

- **60+** pages of content
- Updates to the Caregiver Information and Support Centre website

Spotlight on Seniors event in Saskatoon:

- **800** attendees
- **80** tradeshow booths

Caregiver Information and Support Centre:

- Monthly Caregiver Café Presentations in Saskatoon including:
 - Partnership Program: A Mental Health Presentation
 - Managing Medications as Caregivers
 - Exploring Home Care Options
 - Oral Health: “What Happens In Your Mouth Does NOT Stay in Your Mouth!”
 - Advanced Healthcare Directives
 - Caregiver Lunch N’ Learn: Orientation to Caregiving

FOUNDATIONS LEARNING & SKILLS SASKATCHEWAN

Newcomers and new Canadians



Since 1979, Foundations Learning & Skills Saskatchewan has provided adult tutoring services with the help of trained volunteers and community partners. In 2023, Saskatchewan Blue Cross partnered with them to assist in offering plain/clear language workshops with the University of Saskatchewan medical administrative staff.

“ Clear communication ensures clear understanding. How do you make confident choices for yourself when you don't have equal access to information? Saskatchewan's literacy challenges arise from a limited ability of many to apply reading, writing, numeracy and problem-solving skills to everyday life. Everything is hard and privacy is compromised when you rely on others to help with insurance, making health decisions, or ensuring you are taking your prescriptions correctly. Intensive and collaborative supports are needed and we are pleased Saskatchewan Blue Cross is helping ensure clear language supports are available throughout the province.

— Sheryl Harrow-Yurach, Executive Director, Foundations Learning & Skills Saskatchewan ”

Foundations Learning & Skills Saskatchewan is currently creating plain language resources to address five health conditions most prevalent in Saskatchewan, including:

- Falls (including farm-related injuries)
- Cancers
- Circulatory systems disease
- Respiratory systems disease
- Safe pregnancy

The materials will be launched through Foundations Learning & Skills' strategic list of 241 community partners across Saskatchewan. Additionally, they will be providing plain/clear language workshops with University of Saskatchewan medical administrative staff and students at no charge to attendees.



CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Youth and educators, Newcomers and new Canadians, the actively aging and Indigenous populations

In 2023, Saskatchewan Blue Cross sponsored the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) conference: Resilience in a Changing World. This two-day event shone a light on the importance of mental wellness, bringing together innovative, new techniques in community mental healthcare in the province.

The event offered a wide range of diverse sessions, from Medical Assistance in Dying, the Power of Peer Support as well as Families Leading the Way. By offering our support, we were able to keep registration rates affordable while helping offer thoughtful sessions on mental health.



“ The personal stories/perspectives were incredible. I have gained knowledge/perspectives that I did not have prior to the conference.

— Attendee ”

“ I learned and gained so much during this conference. I had a lot of opportunities to network and make personal connections. The sessions to me were non-judgmental; understandably perhaps some biases; they were inclusive and reduced stigma.

— Attendee ”

“ Hosting Resilience in a Changing World, the first provincial mental health conference in almost 10 years, gave us a unique purpose to bring people from all over Saskatchewan. We had just come out of a global pandemic and worked hard to deliver a rich, diverse program with opportunities to reconnect, learn and heal. The sponsorship of Saskatchewan Blue Cross was critical at so many levels, as they share a commitment to building healthy, vibrant communities where everyone can be their best.

— Faith Bodnar, Executive Director, CMHA Saskatoon (organizer) ”



135 registrants

12 different sessions

3 keynote speakers

20 tradeshow booths

REGINA YMCA

The actively aging

In 2022, Saskatchewan Blue Cross began funding Health Connect, a program that provides the community a way to explore health education and programs. In 2023, the partnership was expanded to the Moose Jaw YMCA.



Health Connect aims to improve the navigation of the healthcare system and increase Health Literacy rates through connection to services, health education and evidence-based programs for adults over 55. This includes Active Aging low-impact fitness classes and Forever In Motion programs.

“ The YMCA are grateful and appreciative to Saskatchewan Blue Cross for their expanded support of Health Connect in the Moose Jaw community. Health Connect supports adults aged 55 years or older to access expanded Health Literacy information and educational supports, provide community connection, and engage in activities to lead their best healthy life. This important community program would not be possible without the partnership and generous support of Saskatchewan Blue Cross.

— Steve Compton, CEO, YMCA of Regina

Topics such as public health, mental health, travel health, elder care, first aid and nutrition were covered.

- The program ran on a weekly basis until the end of June 2023.
- **6** or more participants on each occasion.

- Improving accessibility to Health Connect programs was achieved by creating service delivery partnerships with the Saskatchewan Health Authority and the Regina Public Library.
- In April, The YMCA, in partnership with the Saskatchewan Health Authority, began delivering Forever In Motion once per week at the South Albert Community Space. This program was an immediate success, with **15** attendees each week.
- The YMCA worked with the Regina Public Library to provide Coffee and Conversations at various locations across Regina, including Healthy Diets and Healthy Aging, Falls Prevention, 211 Saskatchewan and Friendly Calls for Seniors.



REGINA AND SASKATOON OPEN DOOR SOCIETIES

Newcomers and new Canadians

Not only do the Regina and Saskatoon Open Door Societies assist with Health Literacy for Newcomers to Canada, they also offer programs and services that allow refugees and immigrants to achieve their goals and take part in their communities.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross partnered with the Regina and Saskatoon Open Door Societies (RODS and SODs) to help provide Health Literacy materials to Newcomers in Saskatchewan. Using the Saskatchewan Health Authority website, RODS and SODS helped create and share easy-to-understand information about local vaccination and immunization clinics and how to access them. This included accessing, updating and translating existing materials.

Additionally, the organizations worked with practicum nurses and social work students to provide access to local and federal health materials to develop and share resources with Newcomers. This included information such as doctor and hospital directories with transportation and interpretation services, organizing health fairs for Newcomers and assisting in making referrals for Newcomers.

“ Funding from Saskatchewan Blue Cross allowed us to enhance the RODS health program, offering various health activities, including health information and promotion, the Newcomers Health Fair 2023 and immunization. We are in the process of working with SODS to organize an Online Health Fair for Newcomers across Saskatchewan on March 12, 2024.

— Mursal Latif, Health Services Educator/Facilitator, Regina Open Door Society



REGINA

- **4** resources were translated, including 911 interpreters, child health and parenting resources, as well as vaccine and immunization sheets.
- Health Fair for Newcomers brought **19** organizations and **200** Newcomers together.
- In collaboration with Saskatchewan Polytechnic Regina, 4th-year nursing students developed and translated health resources for Newcomers.

SASKATOON

- Provided a COVID-19 and Flu Clinic and administered **108** influenza immunizations together with the Saskatchewan Health Authority.
- Ran a radio promotion highlighting health-related issues for Newcomers with Global Voice CFR 90.5.
- Hosted **30** students and their parents, grades 5–8 for the National Day of a Child celebration and creative competition.

UNITED WAY SASKATOON AND AREA/ UNITED WAY REGINA 211 PROGRAM

*Newcomers and new Canadians, the actively aging,
Indigenous populations, youth and educators*

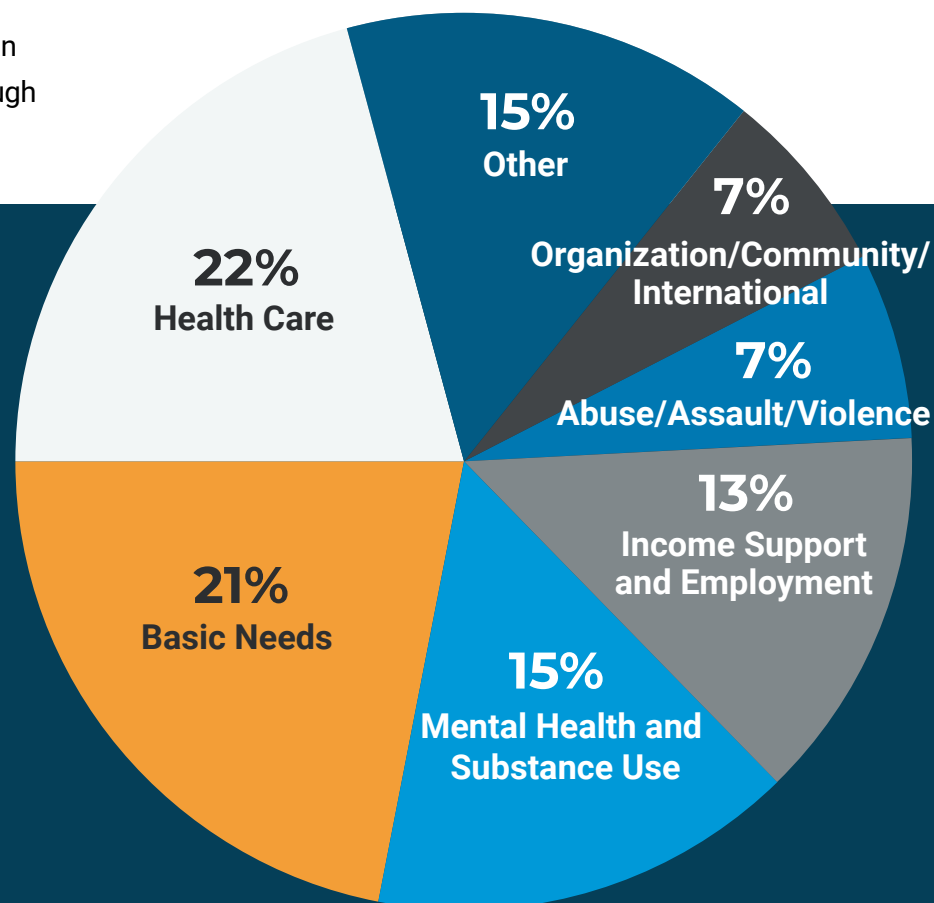
The 211 Saskatchewan program provides access to a free, confidential service that connects residents with assistance for basic needs. Through the support of 211 Saskatchewan, residents can find help with food, shelter and employment, as well as addictions and mental health services.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross has demonstrated their commitment to improving lives through their generous support of United Way's 211 Saskatchewan. Ongoing investment in 211 has strengthened United Way's ability to provide an important connection to services and resources to individuals and families in their time of need. Available 24/7/365 through multiple channels and at no cost, 211 acts as a front door to people looking for human services. In supporting 211, Saskatchewan Blue Cross shows their dedication to strengthening that connection for people in Saskatchewan.

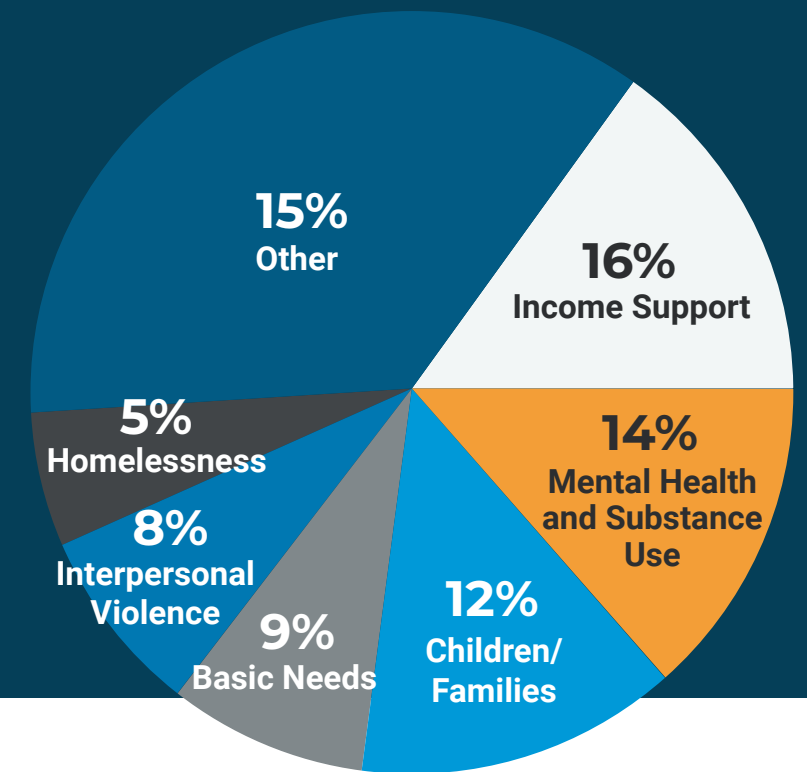
— Kristin Nelson, Director, 211 Saskatchewan

In 2022, there were **220,729** unique visits to the 211 Saskatchewan website and **4,887** contacts through phone, text, web chat or email.

The top reported needs through 211 Saskatchewan's Service Navigators (phone, text, web chat, email) in 2022 were:



The top online searches in 2022 were:



211 STORIES

An individual reached out to 211 Saskatchewan and expressed facing challenges with her mental health. 211's Service Navigator was able to help get her connected to rapid access counselling for immediate support, as well as to a provider for ongoing counselling and a peer support group. Our 211 Service Navigator followed up with this individual about a week after her initial call. During that follow-up call, she was already reporting improvements. She had her first counselling session, which went well and was excited to be starting the peer group in the next couple of days. This individual stated she had renewed hope and was starting to feel more purposeful already.

A recent newcomer to Canada connected with 211 Saskatchewan seeking support. She is a single mother of three young children and needed furniture for their new home, as well as appropriate winter clothing for her and her children. 211 Saskatchewan was able to connect her with a program that provided free or low-cost furniture. She was also connected with a program that provided free winter clothing to those in need. In addition to finding those immediate material goods, 211 Saskatchewan was able to provide her with options for other local settlement services.

A teenager reached out to 211 Saskatchewan via text. They were looking for support to ensure they could finish school while dealing with some family challenges. Specifically, the teenager was interested in supportive housing or shelter options. The 211 Service Navigator was able to provide the youth with a local option for a supportive youth shelter. By ensuring this individual had their needs met, they were able to continue engaging in their education.

— Stories provided by 211 Saskatchewan

TEENSTALK YXE

Youth and educators

As a committed advocate for youth wellbeing and mental health, Saskatchewan Blue Cross supports TeensTalk YXE as they host their youth mental health sharing circles into 2024. Peer support is a vital part of navigating mental health challenges. By providing this space, youth and caregivers have the opportunity to grow, learn, support and connect with others.



In 2023, the Canadian Mental Health Association announced their partnership with TeensTalk YXE. This program was developed to address the gap in youth services in Saskatoon, where youth struggling with their mental health can connect with other youth and access information and education.

“TeensTalk YXE is thrilled to partner with Saskatchewan Blue Cross and is grateful for their support as we continue hosting youth mental health sharing circles into 2024 and begin offering a caregiver/parent peer support sharing circle this fall. Peer support is a vital component to navigating mental health challenges – and by providing this space, youth and caregivers have the opportunity to grow, learn, support and connect with others walking similar paths. Mental health impacts everyone and together, we create a ripple effect of positive change, fostering a healthier and happier community.”

– Pam Hutchings, Co-Founder and Director, TeensTalk YXE



Statistics Canada reports that more than half (52%) of youth between 12 and 17 view their mental health differently than their parents did.

109 youth between the ages of 12 and 18 participated in Youth Sharing Circles in 2023.

28 participants attended parent/caregiver sharing circles (starting in Sept.) for 2023.



YOUTH MATTER

Youth and educators

In 2023, Saskatchewan Blue Cross announced our support for the third annual “Be Kind to Your Mind” Mental Health Symposium in Melfort, Saskatchewan. This event offers a safe, inclusive environment for youth while inspiring positive action and meaningful change with open discussion, new learning strategies and methods for managing stress, anxiety and emotions.



“Youth Matter Canada believes facilitating positive and impactful connections and conversations surrounding mental health for Saskatchewan youth is an important piece to the puzzle of supporting healthy families and communities. Our annual “Be Kind to Your Mind” Mental Health Symposium brings together hundreds of youth to explore and help youth build their own mental wellness toolkit for lifelong wellness. It’s a day of great impact with high energy and excitement for the youth! On behalf of our executive board and team, I’d like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Saskatchewan Blue Cross for partnering with us on this youth mental health initiative!”

– Laura Lawrence, CEO, Youth Matter Canada



The event hosted youth 12+ from fifteen different Saskatchewan communities. These included: Muskoday Cree Nation, Muenster, Humboldt, Chief Poundmaker School, Kinistino, Wakaw, St. Brieux, Prince Albert, Red Earth Cree Nation, Anaheim, Atahcakoop/Whitefish, Melfort, Rosthern and Tisdale.

Over 200 youth, educators and stakeholders attended. Stats from kids include:

- **73%** of the youth indicated they experience feelings of anxiety, worry or fear.
- **69%** of the youth indicated they experience difficulty sleeping.
- **40%** of the youth indicated they had experienced feelings of depression.
- **54%** of the youth indicated they experienced difficulty concentrating at school.

SAFE COMMUNITIES HUMBOLDT & AREA

*Newcomers and new
Canadians, the actively aging*

In October 2023, Saskatchewan Blue Cross provided funding to Safe Communities Humboldt & Area for two clinics: The Senior Safety Symposium and the Newcomer Winter Preparedness Clinic.



The Senior Safety Symposium offered complimentary blood pressure and hearing screening tests, as well as presentations on fire safety, scooter safety, flu/COVID-19 vaccines and medication review, diagnosing Alzheimer's, fraud prevention, healthcare directives and what to expect when you call 911.

80
attendees

Presenters included: Humboldt Fire Department, Community Safety Officers, Shopper's Drug Mart Pharmacy Humboldt, Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan, Weber & Gasper Law, Humboldt & District Ambulance – EMS and Conexus Credit Union in Humboldt.

Meanwhile, the Newcomer Winter Preparedness Clinic offered presentations on how to be safe during a Saskatchewan winter, including vehicle winter survival kits, how to dress warmly, treatment for hypothermia and frostbite and winter clothing and accessory drive.



“The Senior Safety Symposium and the Newcomer Winter Preparedness Clinic are very vital to our communities and very well received. Providing these Health Literacy sessions allowed the seniors and Newcomers in our communities the opportunity to interact with and ask the presenting professionals any questions that they may have. Attendees are able to obtain education on a variety of safety topics and contact phone numbers to acquire further information, in the company of like-minded attendees who may have the same questions, all in one session.”
— Amanda Hauber, Executive Director, Safe Communities Humboldt & Area

50
attendees

Presenters included: Humboldt Fire Department and Humboldt & District Ambulance – EMS

Health Literacy *feature story*

PRINCE ALBERT YWCA INTERPRETER SERVICES

Newcomers and new Canadians

In the past few years, Prince Albert has seen significant growth in refugees and new Canadians. As the Settlement Services Manager at YWCA Prince Albert, Carolyn Hobden helps Newcomers by assigning counsellors and interpreter services to those in need.

“One of our recent arrivals was a family of five who fled Colombia for fears of persecution,” said Carolyn. “When they arrived in Prince Albert, the mother and father expressed concerns over getting their daughter medical assistance.”

At six months old, their eldest daughter Charon was diagnosed with meningitis after a high fever. The meningitis caused long-term health complications for Charon, including seizures, the inability to communicate verbally and requiring constant assistance for everyday activities.

Charon's parents did not speak any English and feared being able to communicate with doctors. Settlement Services at YWCA Prince Albert saw their need and offered their assistance.

“Thanks to our partnership with Saskatchewan Blue Cross, Charon and her parents were provided with an interpreter who speaks Spanish at no cost to them,” said Carolyn. “The interpreter travels with the family to medical appointments, helps them understand the Canadian medical system and is able to explain the tests and medications Charon needs.”

Charon was also fitted with a new wheelchair, giving the family more freedom to get to medical appointments and navigate the community.

“With the help of Saskatchewan Blue Cross, Charon and her family have been able to travel to Saskatoon to see a neurologist and undergo the necessary tests to continue her treatment.”

— Carolyn Hobden, Settlement Services Manager, YWCA Prince Albert





Community Health and Wellbeing

Saskatchewan Blue Cross invests in partnerships with organizations that are dedicated to advancing the health and wellbeing of Saskatchewan residents. We provide critical funding to those who focus on health services and volunteerism.



Community Health and Wellbeing Partnerships

MOOSE JAW YMCA

In 2023, Saskatchewan Blue Cross expanded its Health Connect partnership and programming with the Moose Jaw YMCA and also contributed to the new YMCA Boys Empowerment Program.

The YMCA Boys Empowerment Program in Moose Jaw offers mental health support to youth in grades 6 and 7 through sport. By focusing on supporting mental health through physical activity, youth can find a positive outlet for anxiety and anger. Saskatchewan Blue Cross' contribution helped provide equipment, transportation and contract services such as athletic trainers and honourariums for guest presenters.

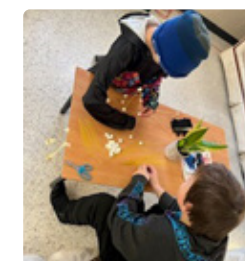


Working with the youth in the program is something that has been so impactful for me. Seeing the boys come together to work through their situations and to better themselves by learning new skills on topics such as mental health, self-esteem and positive masculinity – with the added bonus of physical activity each week. Seeing the excitement week after week is one of the best parts of the Boys Empowerment Program. This program is so important to me because the boys can come out and just be themselves!

– Brenden Hutchinson, Boys Empowerment Leadership Coordinator, YMCA Moose Jaw



- **12** children immediately registered with growing participation.
- Boys attend physical activity programming followed by teambuilding, self-esteem and healthy relationship discussions.



ENCHANTED FOREST LIGHT WALK

In 2023, the BHP Enchanted Forest celebrated their 25th anniversary the Enchanted Forest Light Walk. Saskatchewan Blue Cross was proud to sponsor the event, with proceeds supporting the Saskatoon Zoo Foundation and the Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation for two nights.

With the help of the University of Saskatchewan Huskies Women's Soccer Team, employees from Saskatchewan Blue Cross worked together to serve the community in the warm-up hall at the walk. Volunteers greeted the community, handing out candy canes and serving hot chocolate.

Proceeds from the life walk support the Saskatoon Zoo Foundation, which raises funds for capital projects and improvement at the Saskatoon Zoo and the Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation, in support of innovation.



FRIDAY NIGHT
Over **15,000** guests

SATURDAY NIGHT
Over **5,000** guests



NATIONAL COLLABORATION WITH MAKE-A-WISH CANADA

In 2023, Blue Cross made a historic pledge to help grant over 6,000 new travel wishes to over 26,000 wish kids and their families over the next five years. By 2027, over 130,000 wish kids and their families will have been supported.

LOCAL EVENT: *Trees of Joy*

In 2023, thirty Saskatchewan Blue Cross employees came together to support the first year of Make-A-Wish Trees of Joy in Saskatoon. They were invited to decorate trees, wrap gifts and meet the Make-A-Wish children and their families, allowing them to witness firsthand the impact made through our community outreach.

“ Having Levi's tree delivered to our home after a week of battling sickness brought a smile to all of our faces. Levi LOVED the lights and “look that's Levi” in the ornaments. Plus Woody and Buzz Lightyear topped it all off. THANK YOU so much!
— Shawna Young-Quintin ”

105 wishes were granted in Saskatchewan in 2023.



1,600 wishes were granted nationally in 2023.



“ Gratitude beyond words! Thank you SO much for supporting Make-A-Wish Canada and our Trees of Joy event. We couldn't do what we do without amazing partners like you, Saskatchewan Blue Cross.
— Make-A-Wish Canada ”

MEGABIKE FOR BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF SASKATOON AND AREA INC.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon and Area Inc. has provided life-changing mentoring experiences in Saskatoon for over 50 years. Saskatchewan Blue Cross employees were thrilled to hop on the 30-person bike to pedal for the potential of young people in the community.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon and Area (BBBS) believes that every connection counts in the community, with youth programs that connect people together more than ever before. They provide adult mentors to kids who need someone the most. BBBS Coordinators match children and youth (ages 6–18) with mentors to help them overcome adversities, make healthy choices and ultimately reach their full potential.

MEGABike invited teams of 30 to pedal together in an incredible team-building opportunity while raising funds for BBBS.



In 2023 alone, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Saskatoon and Area Inc. changed the lives of **over 600** children and youth in Saskatoon.

Mentored youth see positive results, with **98%** believing they make good life choices and **80%** pursuing healthy lifestyles.

UNITED WAY DAY OF CARING

In 2023, Saskatchewan Blue Cross proudly participated in the United Way Day of Caring. For the sixth year in a row, employees from Saskatchewan Blue Cross created teams to help with organizations in Saskatoon and projects in their facilities.

United Way Day of Caring connects volunteers to help with local community organizations, demonstrating the difference and impact they can make by working together.

In 2023, Saskatchewan Blue Cross employees assisted Prairie Harm Reduction with refreshing two youth homes to help residents feel safe, accepted and connected. Volunteers also visited the Oski Kisikaw building to brighten their hallways and stairwells to make the space more welcoming, in addition to revitalizing their Healing Room and giving the outdoor space a refresh.



Over 200 volunteers from the business community worked on **20** projects throughout community-based organizations around Saskatoon.



Community Health and Wellbeing Highlights

RURAL HOSPITAL FOUNDATIONS

In 2023, Saskatchewan Blue Cross extended our partnership with Rural Hospital Foundations, ensuring access to critical services, equipment, training and programming to rural communities across the province.

Five hospitals received funding, including St. Joseph's Hospital Foundation, the Health Foundation, St. Anthony's Hospital Foundation, Meadow Lake Hospital Foundation Inc. and Moosomin and District Health Care Foundation.

Funding supports projects such as:

- Dementia Ability education and workshops
- An Ortho centrifuge and incubator
- Surgical medical equipment
- Community wellness

"Saskatchewan Blue Cross advised rural health foundations in early 2023, inviting funding applications. In the fall, they accepted another intake of applications, awarding thousands of dollars again. In our case, they awarded us funding for lab equipment and the machine we are purchasing will be a significant upgrade on older equipment and make a difference for staff in the lab. The equipment we purchased helps our doctors, nurses and technicians provide better care for our residents. We are grateful to Saskatchewan Blue Cross for recognizing rural healthcare needs and for making the effort to help us provide better care."

– Ross Fisher, Chair of the Network of Saskatchewan Hospital and Healthcare Facilities.



SASKATOON HEART SAFE

Saskatchewan Blue Cross is proud of our longstanding partnership with Medavie Health Services West and the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority for the Saskatoon Heart Safe Program, which equips businesses and other community locations with AEDs to allow rapid access in times of need.

Statistics from the Saskatoon Heart Safe Program show that a person's chance of survival drops by 10 per cent every minute unless someone starts chest compressions or uses a defibrillator. A defibrillator used within the first few minutes of collapse increases the patient's survival rate by as much as 75 per cent.

AEDs have saved lives in places including rinks, golf courses, swimming pools, the airport and local businesses. Victims ranged in age from 34 to 83. For example:

- A 46-year-old man collapsed while curling at the rink across from Saskatchewan Blue Cross in Saskatoon. He was saved by staff who used the on-site AED to shock his heart.
- A 69-year-old man suffered a cardiac arrest while at Costco. Staff used the AED located in the store and saved his life.
- A 60-year-old man was shopping at Canadian Tire last summer when an off-duty paramedic from Halifax, who happened to be shopping as well, used the store's AED and saved his life.
- A 79-year-old man collapsed on the ice while playing hockey. He wasn't moving and wasn't breathing. Two fellow hockey players used the AED at the rink to save his life.

"Thanks to Saskatchewan Blue Cross, we've saved 40 lives in Saskatoon. We couldn't do it without their support."

– Troy Davies, Director of Public Affairs at Medavie Health Services West and spokesperson for the program.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Saskatchewan Blue Cross understands that we have an important role to play in Truth and Reconciliation in addition to advancing culture-based conversations and inclusion for the many diverse populations in our province. We're committed to advancing Health Literacy and equal access to health information for all. We celebrate the diversity of cultures and populations in our province.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Partnerships

SASKATOON AND REGINA PRIDE PARADES

Pride gatherings honour and recognize those who fought for basic human rights and continue to both celebrate and advance the continuing work for diversity, equity and inclusion in our communities and workplaces.



In 2023, we proudly partnered with Queen City Pride and Saskatoon Pride as sponsors of the parades with employees participating in both cities.



“The Queen City Pride Festival for 2023 was an absolute success. The support we received from organizations across Regina, including Saskatchewan Blue Cross, was essential to the success of this event. Together, we set a record for the most participants in the Pride Parade and had a solid attendance for all our events. The Regina Pride Festival is growing and we can't wait to see what happens next year!”
— Aidan Roy, Queen City Pride

QUEEN CITY PRIDE

122 parade entries
6,000 attendees
61 community events during the festival
Over 10,000 participants during the festival



ROCK YOUR ROOTS: WALK FOR RECONCILIATION

The 2023 Rock Your Roots: Walk for Reconciliation was held on September 30—National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The walk was a huge success and drew thousands of people to walk along 20th Street West in Saskatoon, wearing orange or “rocking their roots” by dressing in traditional/cultural regalia. The Indigenous ceremony was woven into every aspect of the event.



Walk for Reconciliation gathers Indigenous, non-Indigenous and newcomer peoples to demonstrate their commitment to truth and reconciliations. Participants are invited to wear their cultural regalia or carry signs that celebrate their heritage. As a community investor in the walk, Saskatchewan Blue Cross helped foster positive change.

“The walk reminds Survivors that they can all come together. It was a good feeling to meet up with friends.”
— Residential School Survivor



“We had a great number of participants... The sea of orange shirts was amazing. It was emotional walking down 20th Street and seeing people from different cultures performing.”
— Residential School Survivor

“Thanks to all for welcoming Newcomers (and inviting them to wear their traditional clothes). 105 newcomer clients came and brought flags from their countries. It was nice to have time to interact, and they appreciated the connections we made.”
— Residential School Survivor

around **2,000** attendees

131 volunteers

30 Residential School Survivors

5 Knowledge Keepers



ORANGE SHIRT DAY WALK AND BBQ

In Regina, Saskatchewan Blue Cross sponsored the Orange Shirt Day Walk and BBQ, honouring Indigenous Residential School Survivors and the children who did not make it home.

This event brought the community together to take part in a pipe ceremony, program, healing walk and barbeque with memorial songs and jingle dancers signifying healing. Kerry Benjoe, Eagle Feather News Editor and Residential School Survivor, presented as a guest speaker to tell her story of healing and the path towards truth and reconciliation.

Orange Shirt Day Walk and BBQ was hosted by the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Network (EDIN) with the theme 'Healing our Communities'. The day had opportunities for connection, learning and healing from the pipe ceremony onward. Kerry Benjoe's powerful speech looked back to the trauma of residential schools and forward to the many stories she and the team at Eagle Feather News are bringing to light. As our hearts opened to painful thoughts, the skies seemed to join our tears. We walked in the rain, with young Indigenous children often leading the walkers and carrying the banner. Their energy, freedom and leadership felt so perfectly appropriate for the day. The weather improved so everyone could enjoy the BBQ prepared by Chili for Children and volunteers. Many thanks to Saskatchewan Blue Cross, Reconciliation Regina, Loblaw Companies Limited, SGEU and all our EDIN partners for the generous support that made this impactful day possible.

— Rhonda Rosenberg, Executive Director, Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan



INDSPIRE BURSARY

Indspire is a national Indigenous charity that invests in the education of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. Indspire aims to inspire achievement while educating, connecting and investing in students so they will achieve their highest potential. Saskatchewan Blue Cross is proud to partner with Indspire's Building Brighter Futures to provide two scholarships for students pursuing a career in Social Work.



I am a single mother; I am raising 5 kids in my home. This award has made the biggest difference in my educational journey as it has allowed me to purchase necessities for my children and our home. Food security is not something I am able to brag about, so thank you from the bottom of my heart. Prayers are powerful and I truly believe that my prayers have been answered through your organization. May you be blessed as well.

When I am done school, I hope to work with Indigenous youth and encourage them so that they too will pursue post-secondary education. I hope to share my story of resilience in the face of adversity with those who are struggling with addictions so that they too can realize that recovery is possible as I have once faced that battle.

— Crystal Dawn Fineday



Crystal Dawn Fineday
Convocated October 2023
Bachelor of Indigenous Social Work
First Nations University of Canada



Melinda Alexson

My name is Melinda Alexson from Kahkewistahaw First Nation. I am currently pursuing my Master of Social Work at the University of Regina's Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research. I extend my gratitude for the financial assistance provided and generous support through Indspire. The bursary I received has significantly eased some of my financial responsibility as a single parent, by covering essential household expenses and supporting the needs of my sons. The allocation of the award has enabled me to focus on my studies as a full-time student without the added concern of financial constraints.

— Melinda Alexson

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

feature story

SPARK YOUR PRIDE

On June 13, 2023, Spark Your Pride held their fifth annual event continuing their tradition of bringing together 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, families and allies to share and celebrate the diverse stories, culture and accomplishments of 2SLGBTQ+ people in Saskatchewan.

“I was honoured to represent and bring greetings on behalf of Saskatchewan Blue Cross at Spark Your Pride 2023,” said Kyle Reid, Director of Life and Health Services Operations at Saskatchewan Blue Cross. “The event was the purest representation of building community, highlighted by story sharing of the courageous pasts lived by our 2SLGBTQ+ people in Saskatchewan.”



This year celebrated the 30th anniversary of Saskatchewan’s Human Rights Act. Attendees were treated to the history and experience of LGBTQ youth in Western Canada by historian and University of Saskatchewan Professor Valerie Korinek. Not only did the event offer 25 exhibits, presentations, queer art displays and other unique activities, it also included never-before-told stories of Saskatchewan’s queer past.

Saskatchewan became the seventh province to amend its charter of rights to protect the human rights of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. In recognition, Kyle encouraged people to explore

the Human Rights section of Pride on the Prairies, an exhibit by the Diefenbaker Canada Centre on Queer History in Saskatchewan.



“As we celebrate Pride every June, it’s important to remember that these parades and festivals were born out of protest, by the brave gay and lesbian activists and groups that fought hard for their basic human rights,” said Kyle.

“I hope we are also reminded of how important it is that we live with pride and respect in our hearts every day and recognize the strength that comes in diversity. After all, that can make all the difference in someone’s life today, tomorrow, or somewhere down the road.”



Empowering healthy lives.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross is proud to be a recognized leader in the province.



Who we serve



- 1 in 5** people in Saskatchewan served
- \$122M+** claims paid each year for health, dental and drug claims
- 1,000+** employers count on us to support their employees
- 178K+** queries from members annually online, in-person and by phone
- \$5.6M** donations to organizations over the last five years

Learn more

Discover more about the impact we make in Saskatchewan communities and partner with us.

[SK.BLUECROSS.CA](https://sk.bluecross.ca)

[SK-BLUECROSS.SPONSOR.COM](https://sk-bluecross.sponsor.com)

Spark Your Pride reached over **2,000** community members, queer and ally, with the message of **“inclusion of our stories in Saskatchewan’s history.”**



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