



# 2024 COMMUNITY INVESTMENT REPORT

# Land acknowledgment

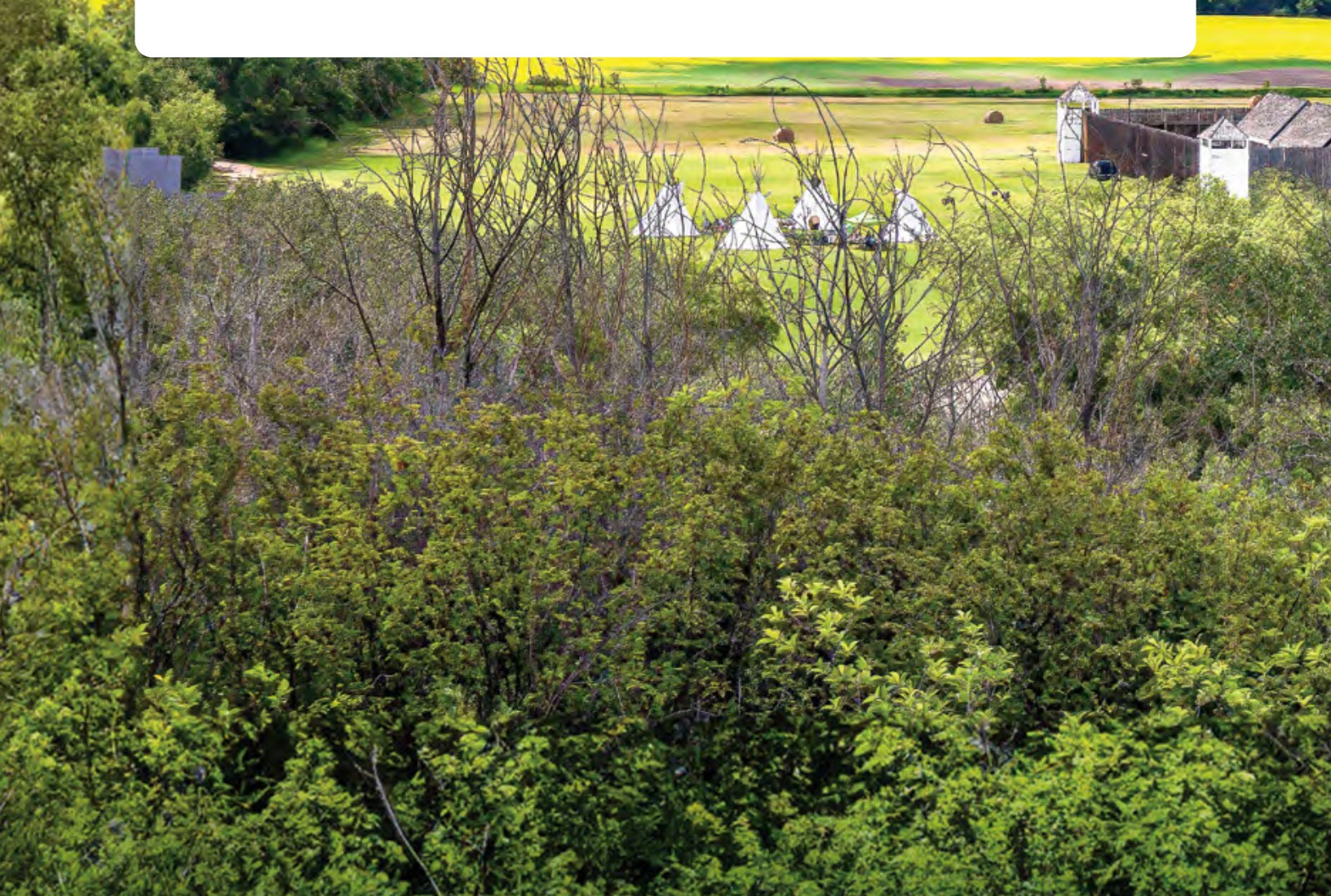
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Saskatchewan Blue Cross proudly operates on Treaty 2, Treaty 4, Treaty 5, Treaty 6, Treaty 7, Treaty 8 and Treaty 10 territories and the Homeland of the Métis.

These lands are marked with the footprints of generations of Indigenous peoples before us and we all have a duty to reconciliation, the greatest cultural opportunity of our time.

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.

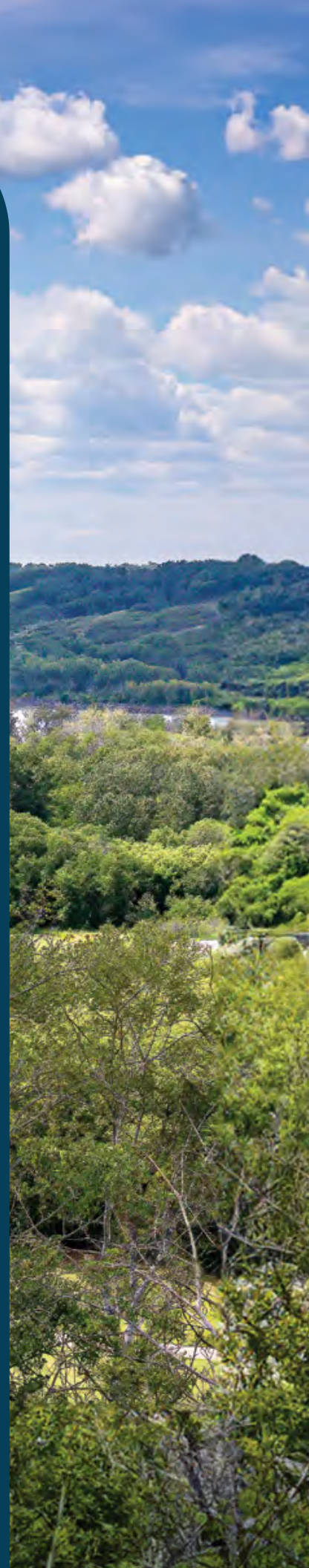
We acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past and we are committed to moving forward in partnership with Indigenous Nations in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration. To acknowledge this territory and its keepers of their traditional terms is to act in reciprocity to understand the truth and make reconciliation possible.



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# Our story

## Empowering healthy lives.

Proud to have operated in Saskatchewan since 1946, Saskatchewan Blue Cross delivers exceptional health and wellness, travel and life insurance solutions while creating a positive community impact across Saskatchewan. As a local, socially responsible not-for-profit, we put people and communities first.



**200,000+**  
lives covered



**1,000+**  
employers trust  
us to provide  
group benefits



**23**  
communities  
we employ in  
across  
Saskatchewan

## Mission, Vision and Values

### 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*

Saskatchewan Blue Cross engages with and supports organizations and individuals across the province, from Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation, Make-A-Wish Saskatchewan, Ronald McDonald House Charities and more. We're proud to be able to say the entire province benefits from the work done by the charities and organizations we support.

**139**  
**COMMUNITIES**  
**SUPPORTED**

## IN OUR COMMUNITY



Rock Your Roots: Walk for Reconciliation



Hope's Home: Swinging with the Stars



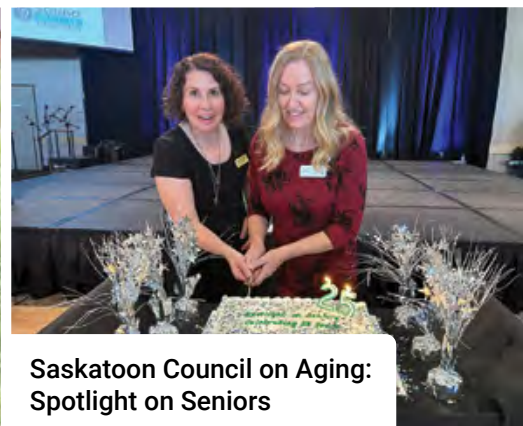
National Indigenous Peoples Day in Regina



Global Gathering Place: Ride for Refuge



United Way: Day of Caring



Saskatoon Council on Aging: Spotlight on Seniors



Aboriginal Friendship Centres



Orange Shirt Day Walk and BBQ Regina

## 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.” Through innovative products, services and experiences coupled with a dynamic Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, we strive to meet the growing needs of the communities and people we serve.

With each new initiative and program supported through Community Investment, we advance meaningful impact in the areas of:



Our award-winning Community Investment Program strengthens local networks and delivers measurable, meaningful results across Saskatchewan. With a sharp focus on Health Literacy, Community Health and Wellness, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, we work with the organizations we support to ensure our investments drive best practice outcomes.

As we look to the future, we are committed to expanding our efforts, forging new relationships and creating even more opportunities for communities to thrive. A collaborative approach is vital to building a healthier and more inclusive Saskatchewan and we're proud to be a leader in community engagement.

I extend my deepest thanks to our community partners and employees, whose passion and commitment make these efforts possible. Together, we are growing stronger and our collective impact continues to shape a brighter future for all. I encourage you to explore these pages and see how Saskatchewan Blue Cross is making a lasting difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelly Wilson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Kelly Wilson**  
President and CEO  
Saskatchewan Blue Cross



# Health Literacy



Saskatchewan Blue Cross envisions a future of equitable access to health and wellness information for everyone, where each person understands how to navigate health information and services effectively to make appropriate health decisions.

We're committed to acting as a catalyst for positive change, supporting education and programs that advance Health Literacy with the following four key groups:

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

Health Literacy is a driver of a strong economy, with far-reaching benefits for communities and residents. A health-literate province enjoys better overall health outcomes, reducing the burden on healthcare and public services, allowing systems to efficiently and effectively support vulnerable communities.

Advancing Health Literacy demands collaboration across various sectors and organizations. We are dedicated to serving as a catalyst for positive change, fostering partnerships and creating opportunities for organizations to collaborate effectively.

In 2024, Saskatchewan Blue Cross requested that the Government of Saskatchewan proclaim October 2024 "Health Literacy Month" in recognition of the 25 years it has been celebrated nationally and internationally.

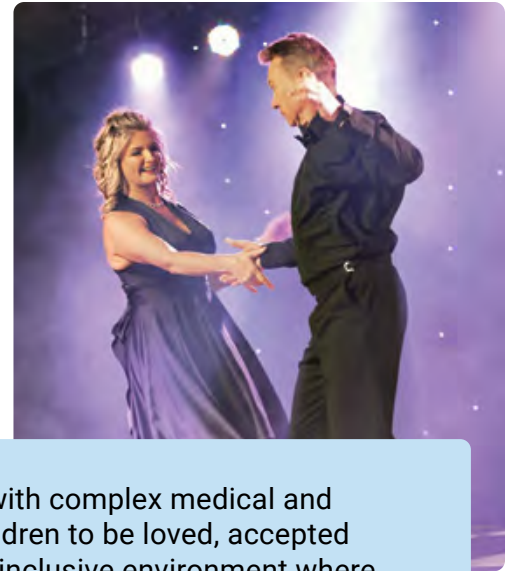
The Ministry of Health announced the proclamation, reaffirming support for organizations across Saskatchewan in their efforts to amplify Health Literacy.





# Youth and educators

## HOPE'S HOME



Hope's Home in Regina provides inclusive care so that children with complex medical and typical needs can learn grow and thrive. Their vision is for all children to be loved, accepted and valued members of their communities, providing a safe and inclusive environment where children with diverse needs learn, grow and thrive.

Founded in 2005, Hope's Home gives children the opportunity to be kids, also providing families the chance to be families across Saskatchewan.

The operating staff at Hope's Home includes administrative assistants, nurses, early childhood educators, physical development consultants, recreation programmers and developmental workers.

In 2024, Saskatchewan Blue Cross was the presenting sponsor of Swinging with the Stars (SWTS) in Regina as well as the prize sponsor for the Prince Albert event. This event brings influential individuals in the community together and pairs them with a professional dancer to perform in front of a live audience.



Participating in SWTS was an experience I will always remember and cherish. It's an incredibly unique fundraiser that is exciting, fun and different from any others I've ever participated in. The professional dancers are amazing, the volunteer dancers put their heart and soul into dancing and helping Hope's Home and I had the opportunity to meet the staff and children at Hope's Home, which opened my eyes to the incredible work this organization does. I'd highly recommend that more people become involved in one way or another. I'd tell any future dancers that it was so much fun to participate in and knowing you're supporting an amazing organization makes it even more worthwhile.

—Chad Engel, SaskPower, 2024 Celebrity Dancer/2024 People's Choice Award Winner



600 attendees

**\$163,000**

raised at  
Swinging with the  
Stars Regina.

497 attendees

**\$203,000**

raised at  
Swinging with the  
Stars Prince Albert.



# TEENSTALK YXE

## MONTHLY SHARING CIRCLES

Founded in 2022, TeensTalk YXE helps create a safe space for youth and caregivers to learn and unlearn about mental health. TeensTalk YXE also helps spread awareness around teen mental health, disrupts stigmas and builds supportive communities for youth.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross invests in its Monthly Sharing Circles, helping address the stigma that youth living with mental health diagnoses face through education. The Circles allow teens and parents to share their experiences, coping strategies, struggles and successes with peers who can relate to them.

“ The parent support group is one of a kind and the most welcoming, safe space to share and connect with other parents who are living through similar experiences and challenges that come with raising children who face mental health challenges. I leave every meeting with a sense of optimism and a takeaway – whether it is something new learned or something to try or think about. – Parent attendee ”

“ First time coming, felt very welcomed and not judged. When sharing the struggles, I felt more embraced than someone to feel sorry for. I went home and cried from just feeling seen and heard. – Parent attendee ”

What do I get out of it?  
It is really helpful to interact with other parents who understand how stressful it is to parent children with mental health challenges. It is good to be able to offer support to one another. We heard different perspectives on what programs are available, and what has maybe been helpful or not while navigating challenges.

First time coming, felt very welcomed and not judged. When sharing the struggles felt more embraced than someone to feel sorry for. Went home and cried ~~was~~ from just feeling seen and heard.

The parent support group is one of a kind and the most welcoming, safe space to share and connect with other parents who are living through similar experiences & challenges that come with raising children who face mental health challenges.  
I leave every meeting with a sense of optimism and a takeaway - whether it is something new learned or something to try or think about.

What do I get from this group?  
- Support! - A place to belong  
- Support from other parents that have a child/teen w mental health issues.  
- Ideas on what has worked for other parents.  
- A place to be heard  
- A place that I feel like my feelings are valid.

This group has been invaluable to me as a parent of neurodiverse children, particularly those who struggle with their mental health. To know that I'm not alone in this journey, as well as to find out about other professionals and resources that are available to us, has been most important to me.

This group has been a lifeline for me. It has been so helpful for me to connect with other people who also have children that struggle with their mental health.  
“When our children struggle we know that their caregivers struggle too”

## YOUTH MATTER CANADA (YMC)



The Youth Matter Canada Mental Health Symposium brings students and teachers together to create a safe, inclusive environment to inspire positive action and change for youth. Through open discussion, new learning strategies and methods for managing stress, anxiety and emotions, participants are provided tools to maintain healthy life-long mental wellness.



Saskatchewan Blue Cross sponsored the October 2024 event, which brought together schools from **13** different communities across Saskatchewan. **350** students spent the day immersed in creative exploration with unique and talented artists, creatives and mental health advocates to build on their mental health and well-being.



Thanks to the generous donation of Saskatchewan Blue Cross, our 4th annual 2024 YMC 'Mental Health for Youth' Symposium was once again a great success with 350 youth in attendance from 13 different Saskatchewan communities. The communities that attended were: Quill Lake, Chief John Big River, Archerwill, Melfort, Muskoday Cree Nation, Bernard Constant James Smith Cree Nation, Cudworth, Wakaw, Muenster, Humboldt, St. Brieux, Lake Lenore and Kelvington.

Throughout the day, the youth engaged with mental health keynote speakers and workshop facilitators who shared their lived experiences and mental health 'tool kits' with the students to help them build their own life-long mental wellness tools and coping skills to help manage life's challenges. One of the key highlights for the youth is receiving their "Be Kind to Your Mind" t-shirt and mental health swag bag as part of their registration. Another highlight this year was the Creeland Métis Jigging Dancers who put on a phenomenal performance for the youth and engaged them in discussion of Indigenous Culture and the history of Métis people. Our organization is grateful to have sponsors like Saskatchewan Blue Cross help us, help youth.

— Laura Lawrence, Founder and Director, Youth Matter Canada



## FEEDBACK FROM SCHOOLS, STUDENTS AND TEACHERS:

This was the second year our school has participated in the YMC Symposium and it keeps getting better! Our students loved hearing the different perspectives, vulnerability, networking and meeting kids from other schools. The day was jam-packed with intentional opportunities for learning and to have open discussions as a collective about youth mental health and its challenges. Excited to come back next year!

The Symposium is a great experience for all staff and students that attend. It is a time to reflect, check emotions, and plan ways to support. Students and staff NEED this, more than once a year too. The stories are remembered [and] the emotions are felt, making it an unforgettable experience and one to build future lessons within the classroom.

This day gave us ALL new insights! I left feeling hopeful for the positive impact it will have on the lives of the youth of our community. Thanks to the YMC team!

The students had such a great time listening to the speakers and engaging in constructive conversations within their peer group. They enjoyed meeting other students from other communities and got really excited about the swag bags and sponsored awards that were provided.

The YMC was wonderfully organized. The students were excited right from the moment they walked in the door. The speakers were engaging and relevant. This was the first year our school attended and I cannot wait until next year so I can apply to come back again!





# Indigenous communities

## ABORIGINAL FRIENDSHIP CENTRES



The Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan promotes, advocates and represents 11 different provincial community hubs in the province while working with the National Association of Friendship Centres. Together, they work to share resources and expertise, exchanging ideas that act as a collective voice for urban Indigenous people.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross is committed to supporting the Friendship Centres, ensuring that they can offer culturally relevant mental health services. These services look to remove barriers and ensure urban Indigenous people have access to mental health services in safe, culturally respectful settings.

**With the financial support from Saskatchewan Blue Cross, services were enabled in five communities, including:**

- La Loche
- Île-à-la-Crosse
- Meadow Lake
- Regina
- North Battleford



“ The workshop was amazing and to be able to create a beautiful belt that symbolizes our beautiful culture. It created a sense of community and connection. It was nice to have the medicine wheel teachings too, it brought awareness to how we can be mindful of oneself. ”

– Participant in Regina

“ It was interesting and I learned a lot. It reminded me of how my late grandparents gave me a heads up of how the medicines (plants) were used and they were gonna die. Now we are relearning it again. ”

– Participant in Regina

**In 2024, over 200 individuals accessed these barrier-free, culturally relevant mental health supports. Activities included:**

- Medicine Wheel teachings including actions in the physical, emotional, spiritual and mental areas.
- Indigenous storytelling and medicine through trauma-informed cultural teachings and access to language.
- Access to barrier-free service providers in the mental health and wellbeing field, including healthy relationships, virtual service providers and benefit providers.
- Traditional medicine knowledge sharing and medicine sharing.
- The medicine of gathering and sharing healthy cultural meals.
- Access to Elders and Knowledge Keepers to support mental health initiatives.
- Access to ceremony and cultural teachings behind ceremonies.

# NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

As an Indigenous Engagement Charter Signatory, Saskatchewan Blue Cross is committed to Indigenous engagement. In observance of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we closed to allow our team members to take part in public events, encouraging employees to listen, learn and reflect.

As part of a learning opportunity, guest speaker Tarrant Cross Child was invited to deliver a presentation to the organization, providing team members a chance to listen and educate themselves as we continue our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation. **90** team members from Saskatchewan Blue Cross joined the discussion.

Tarrant Cross Child created a community dedicated to supporting Indigenous youth of Northern Saskatchewan struggling with

mental health. As a Co-Founder of Prairie Flooring, Tarrant removes economic barriers by providing training and career opportunities to Indigenous peoples. Through his inspiring journey, Tarrant has also introduced running as a transformative healing option for mental health. His involvement in the establishment of 'Child of the Cross Running Clinics,' 'Prairie Run Crew' and 'Brainsport Shoe Donation' programs are some of the ways in which Tarrant encourages individuals to lead active and healthy lifestyles.



My goal and my hope is to always bring a message of hope and restoration through living a healthy and active lifestyle. Do that by loving and serving the communities.

— Tarrant Cross Child

# INDSPIRE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Indspire is a national Indigenous charity focused on supporting the education of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people for their long-term benefit, as well as that of their families, communities and Canada. Their vision is to enrich Canada through Indigenous education and inspire achievement, collaborating with Indigenous, private and public sector stakeholders to educate, connect and invest in Indigenous individuals to help them reach their highest potential.

Since 2021, Saskatchewan Blue Cross has proudly supported its scholarship program with an Indigenous Bursary, helping ensure that Indigenous students are able to achieve what they call their North Star – that within a generation, every Indigenous student will graduate.

## Student story



My name is Raina Buffalo-Pechawis. I am from a small reserve called the Whitecap Dakota Nation. I live with my mom and younger brother in Whitecap and go to school in Saskatoon, driving about thirty minutes to and from home. I am a Powwow dancer and love to travel to different Powwows during the summer.

I am currently in my 3rd year at the University of Saskatchewan, majoring in studio art. Art is my life, and I want to share it with others – whether teaching art, or becoming a professional artist. Growing up in the reserve, I was not a scholar or an

A-grade student, but I always tried my best whether I was good at the subject or not.

Art is the total opposite for me. I put my heart and soul into everything I make and I am realizing that becoming an artist is as important as any other career. My heart knows I want to pursue my art practice full-time as a career in the future and bring it with me everywhere I go.

This bursary feels amazing. My mom always told me things we do for other people (or ourselves) will always come back in a positive way and I believe my efforts have done exactly that. As an Indigenous student driving to school from the reserve almost every day, school has been challenging financially and this will be so helpful!

Not only is it encouraging to receive something like this, but it is also a humbling experience for me. Thank you for your kind-hearted support, to me and to other Indigenous students.

### Raina Buffalo-Pechawis

Whitecap Dakota First Nation, SK  
Studio Art (3rd year),  
University of Saskatchewan



## Student story



My name is Logan Hradecki and I'm in my first year of medical school at the University of Saskatchewan.

Thank you for supporting me financially, I greatly appreciate it. Awards like these allow me to focus on my education and future aspirations, rather than stressing about money. Not only that, but it boosts my confidence and purpose as it shows

that the sponsors of this award believe I deserve it.

I enjoy the patient-to-physician relationship and treating the patient holistically, taking their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health into consideration. I aspire to be a physician who creates a safe and warm space for their patients, so they always feel like they can come back if they ever need to. I'm always looking to improve myself in all aspects of life so I can become the best physician I'm capable of.

I've attached a photo of myself that was recently taken following the white coat ceremony.

I greatly appreciate your support in my journey, Maarsii (Thank you). Take Care.

### Logan Hradecki

Métis Nation, SK  
 Medicine, University of Saskatchewan

# CUMFI MÉTIS CULTURAL DAYS

Saskatchewan Blue Cross is a proud sponsor of CUMFI Métis Cultural Days, taking part in promoting and sharing cultures and practices. This grass roots, Métis-focused event raises awareness, encourages the public to participate and educates in Métis arts, culture and history. The event hosted over **2,500** attendees over three days.

CUMFI is considered one of the leading Aboriginal Supported Housing and Wellness Community Organizations in Saskatoon. With properties throughout the Saskatoon Core Neighbourhood, CUMFI provides vital support for disenfranchised and vulnerable populations while also providing affordable living for those in need. Their focus has always been on supporting women, children, and families. They provide cultural guidance and supports to a plethora of organizations and businesses in the community. Their partnerships with both the Catholic and Public-School Boards are integral in the teaching and learning of Métis and First Nation Culture and history.

## RECONCILIATION SASKATOON

### ROCK YOUR ROOTS: WALK FOR RECONCILIATION IN SASKATOON

Rock Your Roots: Walk for Reconciliation in Saskatoon gathers Indigenous, non-Indigenous and Newcomer peoples at Victoria Park to demonstrate their commitment to truth and reconciliation. Participants are invited to “Rock Your Roots” by wearing cultural regalia or carrying signs that celebrate their heritage. The walk begins with an Indigenous ceremony led by Residential School Survivors who are honoured through this experience.



In 2024, Saskatchewan Blue Cross reaffirmed our commitment to reconciliation by sponsoring and volunteering at the event, welcoming students who arrived to participate. **25** team members from Saskatchewan Blue Cross volunteered and participated in the walk, bringing together over **5,000** individuals from all walks of life.

“ We’ve heard from so many survivors that this is an opportunity to get to walk with all the generations of their family and be seen by the greater community so that community members can show their commitment to truth and reconciliation. — Carrie Catherine, (former) Director, Reconciliation Saskatoon ”





# NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY IN REGINA

National Indigenous Peoples Day in Regina celebrates the rich heritage, diversity and remarkable achievements of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada. The event allows the community to deepen their understanding and appreciation of Indigenous peoples' unique heritage and outstanding contributions. Attendees participate in interactive and educational experiences, such as First Nation cultural teachings and a tipi demonstration, while enjoying renowned artists and performers.



As a member of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Network in Regina, Saskatchewan Blue Cross proudly participated in and sponsored the National Indigenous Peoples Day celebration. The event brought over **5,000** people together to listen and learn.

# ORANGE SHIRT DAY WALK AND BBQ REGINA

To commemorate National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, participants of the Orange Shirt Day Walk and BBQ in Regina brought the community together in the theme of Healing Our Communities. The program began with traditional ceremonies, including speakers and performers, before commencing the walk with jingle dress healers honouring residential school survivors and children who did not make it home.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross was pleased to once again sponsor and participate in the event, which hosted over **500** people and acknowledged the impact that Canada's Residential School System had on our history and ongoing legacies.

It is so valuable for provincial and local organizations to come together in partnership to offer accessible community programming for both National Indigenous Peoples Day and National Truth and Reconciliation Day/ Orange Shirt Day. The support from Saskatchewan Blue Cross allows us to engage traditional knowledge keepers and performers from the community.

— Rhonda Rosenberg, Executive Director,  
Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan





# Newcomers and new Canadians

## REGINA AND SASKATOON OPEN DOOR SOCIETIES



The Regina Open Door Society and Saskatoon Open Door Society (RODS and SODS) are not-for-profit organizations that provide settlement and integration services for refugees and Newcomers to Regina and Saskatoon. Their work helps individuals adjust and participate in Saskatchewan communities by promoting and extending community services to assist them in achieving their goals of being a part of their communities.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross invests in RODS and SODS Health Literacy for Newcomers projects, enabling them to take part in promotion and outreach with community partner activities and health-related clinics. Funding also ensures the development of resource materials and information for Newcomers and community partners, such as posters and brochures. Additionally, the support of Saskatchewan Blue Cross assisted in developing and facilitating group presentations and sessions for Newcomers.

In January, SODS worked with the Saskatchewan Health Authority to provide a vaccine clinic for Afghan Refugees, with **39** people vaccinated for influenza, Covid and MMR. Staff at SODS were able to provide education before the vaccine

clinic as well as follow-up post-vaccine, helping to enhance participants' Health Literacy. In February, RODS partnered with Saskatchewan Polytechnic Dental Clinic to host two Dental Clinics where **60** Newcomers received dental screening and oral health education. In addition, clients with severe dental issues were referred to the Saskatchewan Polytechnic Dental Clinic for further treatment.

In March, RODS collaborated with Age-Friendly Regina to translate the Age-Friendly Mental Health and Wellbeing document into four languages: Pashto, Dari, Swahili and Arabic. The translated documents highlight information on community resources for the aging population.



In partnership with the Saskatchewan Collaborative Bachelor of Science in Nursing (SCBScN), the nursing practicum students developed and offered health-related resources for RODS staff to share with clients:

### Family Physician List

Newcomers expressed challenges in locating a family physician, which resulted in the creation of a Family Physician list with information about who is accepting new patients, the language the staff speaks and the clinic contact information. The list includes physicians who speak Arabic, Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Korean, Spanish, Punjabi, Greek, Nigerian, Hindi and more.

### Sexual Health Education

Newcomers indicated the need for sexual health education and how to access contraceptives. This resulted in the practicum students gathering information and facilitating two separate sessions for male and female Newcomers. Due to the sensitive topic and the need to eliminate the language barriers and encourage open discussion during the sessions, male and female interpreters and student presenters were assigned to the groups. Twenty-four (24) female and five (5) male Newcomers were able to receive information about different birth control options that are gender-based and culturally appropriate.

On March 12, RODS and SODS hosted an online Health Saskatchewan Info-Session for 60 Newcomers. The session's goal was to help Newcomers increase their understanding of the different healthcare options in Saskatchewan, learn about the different health practitioner roles and feel confident in their healthcare decisions. The three-hour virtual event included health presentations and activities, such as:

- **Body Movement** – Tai Chi physical break presented by SODS staff May Jiao
- **Health Navigation in Saskatoon** – presented by SODS staff Ramlah Iqbal
- **Health Navigation in Regina** – presented by Chantel Lahaye Director of South Primary Health Network
- **Patient Rights and Responsibilities** – presented by SHA staff Tara Anderson
- **Pharmacist: What can a pharmacist do for you?** – presented by Winnipeg Street Pharmacy staff Trent Ferguson
- **Nurse Practitioner: Roles and Responsibilities** – presented by Nurse Practitioner Angela Robinson
- **Nutritionist: Buying Groceries in Saskatchewan** – presented by RCC Nutritionist staff Heather Dzioba

### Regina Health Resources

Various Regina health resources were compiled for Newcomers about children's and adults' vaccinations, how and when to use 811, 911 and 988 numbers, public health clinics and mental health resources. The information was then shared with Newcomers during individual and group sessions including: Breast, Testicular and Prostate Cancer.

In November, Saskatchewan Blue Cross sponsored the Saskatoon Open Door Society Health fair, welcoming 105 individuals with health programs and services. The event offered information on:

- Winter safety
- Naloxone training
- Self-care tips
- Crohn's disease
- Healthy eating
- Car seat education
- Prenatal and pregnancy education
- Sexual health
- Health Literacy
- Primary prevention



“ Lots of very important topics covered in a short time...a definite gem for anyone starting their life in Saskatchewan. Look forward to many more to come. – Client testimonial ”

# YWCA PRINCE ALBERT

Every day, the YWCA Prince Albert works with vulnerable members of their community, offering services like shelter and supportive housing, free community programming for employment and housing, advocacy for women, girls and gender-diverse individuals, Newcomer and settlement services, as well as English Language instruction. They are a leader in providing awareness through education and advocacy by raising awareness of women and other vulnerable individuals in the community.



For the third year, Saskatchewan Blue Cross invested in the YWCA in Prince Albert to assist **78** individuals, providing interpreters and transportation services for clients. Their settlement services provide newly landed immigrants and refugees with short-term and long-term assistance based on their needs. Counsellors work with individuals to foster independence and encourage active participation in the community.

## Stories

I would like to express my thankfulness for the health assistance provided through the Saskatchewan Blue Cross funds. This allowed the YWCA to help with transportation and interpretation to my medical appointments. I arrived to Canada as a refugee and had bullets in my body for some time that were not removed due to limited health care in the refugee camp. I am so thankful for the health system here. It has made a difference, I can understand what Doctors are telling me about my condition and the care I will get. No Doctors speak my language and with my limited English it is a struggle to communicate with my Doctor the problem and to understand my future treatments and appointments.

I am thankful for my son was able to be helped. When I arrived I had no English at all and my son had a problem of excessive epileptic seizures. He loses his balance and fell and was sent to the hospital by ambulance many times, at school, and at home. I am so thankful that someone who speaks my language could translate and explain clearly all the details of what was happening to my son. With the Saskatchewan Blue Cross funds available we had to go to many specialists to understand the exact cause and how he needed to take his medication daily to prevent this from happening. He is now on medication that is helping him and I was told clearly in my language how important it is to give it to him daily at the same time each day to prevent this from happening. We still go for tests and to see the specialist often. Thank you.



Update on Charon from 2023 report.

“

At five months old, my daughter had meningitis, which left her with severe brain trauma, unable to talk, walk or take care of her personal needs. With the support of the Saskatchewan Blue Cross, I was able to get a translator/interpreter who accompany the family to Saskatoon for appointments with a number of specialists like a Neurologist and Pediatrician. Charon's life had improved a lot since she arrived in Canada, she now, grabs things by herself, brings food to her mouth slowly, she is more active as she goes to parks and is able to walk and participates in games with her little siblings. Our family is thankful for all the support and are happy to see our daughter improving day by day.

”



# GLOBAL GATHERING PLACE

Global Gathering Place (GGP) is a settlement agency in Saskatoon that supports Newcomers. It offers assistance to those with the highest need due to overlapping vulnerabilities. GGP assists individuals who face issues with various factors, including poverty, language, housing, education and more.

## RIDE FOR REFUGE

Saskatchewan Blue Cross is a proud sponsor, volunteer and participant in Ride for Refuge. President and CEO Kelly Wilson kicked off the event with welcome remarks. Staff from Saskatchewan Blue Cross formed Team Blue to assist with handing out water and snacks to participants, with additional team members taking part as walkers and riders.



The event surpassed its goal of **\$25,000**, raising **\$34,900** with **112** participants, **18** teams and **33** volunteers.

## CULTURAL HEALTH NAVIGATORS

Global Gathering Place's Cultural Health Navigators program trains workers to assist refugees in accessing health services. Providing a combination of interpretation services, mediation, advocacy and education about Health Literacy, they encourage clients to understand their health needs and facilitate discussions with healthcare providers.



Saskatchewan Blue Cross is an invested supporter of the Cultural Health Navigators, knowing that this critical service benefits clients and healthcare providers. The workers educate providers on the needs, expectations and barriers that refugee patients may have, ultimately promoting a more accessible and inclusive healthcare system.

1,460

hours of Cultural Health Navigation and Interpretation utilized in 2024.



My name is Wakal. I came to Saskatoon, Canada, in January 2024. We are a family of nine. While we were at the hotel, some people from Global Gathering Place came and informed us about their program and plans. When we moved to our permanent house, they made an appointment with our family doctor, dentist and ophthalmologist and we attended to all of that. Also, we received our immunizations. At every appointment, they booked an interpreter because we could not speak English and accompanied us at every appointment and showed us how to use the buses and know the location. I have a large family, and I couldn't speak English if the Global Gathering Place workers were not available. We would not have been able to book a doctor's appointment or go to the appointment. My family and I are very grateful for all their help and support and we wish their happiness and success.

– Wakal, Newcomer to Saskatchewan



## PATH PROGRAM

The Providing Access to Healthcare, or PATH program, helps promote better health outcomes among refugees, providing one-on-one health support to individuals during their first six months in Canada. PATH team members help refugees navigate the healthcare system, addressing barriers like language, transportation and unfamiliarity with Canada.

As a champion of Health Literacy, Saskatchewan Blue Cross invests in the PATH program, understanding that the program also works to engage the wider community in sharing responsibility for serving the growing Newcomer demographic and inspiring greater collaboration.



PATH helped me and my family find a family doctor and follow up with my medical appointments to maintain good health. The most important was interpretation, which was significant to communicating with health providers. It made us feel safe and we were in good hands and had a positive impact on our life.

– Walid, PATH program member



PATH was a great program, and it helped my family to maintain all things related to my and my family's health. Thank you for the health's coverage and for the doctor's well care!

– Mhd Zakaria, PATH program member



# REGINA COMMUNITY CLINIC

The Regina Community Clinic is a unique healthcare co-operative in Regina where patients and members are partners in their healthcare. The clinic focuses on holistic, collaborative care, offering physical, mental, social and educational services. Their team of health professionals provide a wide range of services to both members and the broader community.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross invests in the clinics' Refugee Health Program, ensuring that refugees can access additional health services in the community. In 2024, over **200** refugees and their families were served, helping address their unique needs and health issues. Funding supported not only translation services but also ensured individuals could access health services such as specialist appointments, public health assessments, vaccinations and pharmacy or prescription therapy.

“ The support from Saskatchewan Blue Cross has been instrumental in providing continuity of care for refugees requiring health services in the community. Without this additional support to fund interpretation services, there could be negative impacts on refugee health care. As a result of this funding, we are ensuring that we are protecting our refugee clients and our general population.

— Dr. Razawa Maroof, lead physician and interpreter (right)





# SAFE COMMUNITIES HUMBOLDT & AREA

## WINTER PREPAREDNESS FOR NEWCOMERS

Safe Communities Humboldt & Area is a community-driven not-for-profit organization that dedicates its efforts to eliminating injuries while promoting a culture of safety with educational programs.



In October 2024, Saskatchewan Blue Cross sponsored the Newcomer Winter Preparedness Clinic. This event welcomed individuals to education presentations from the Humboldt Fire Department, Humboldt & District Ambulance—EMS and Brenda Shrader on how to prepare for winters in Saskatchewan. After the presentations, people were welcomed to the clothing shop, where they could collect winter items from the local clothing drive. Each household was also provided with carbon monoxide detectors.

**23** adults plus children attendees | **3** presenters

## SENIOR SAFETY SYMPOSIUM

Also in October, Saskatchewan Blue Cross sponsored the 2024 Senior Safety Symposium. This event provided attendees with information on:

- **Fire safety and getting up from a fall** – Humboldt Fire Department
- **Scooter safety and bylaws** – Humboldt’s community safety officer
- **Flu and Covid vaccines and medication review** – Shoppers Drug Mart Pharmacy Humboldt
- **Importance of early diagnosis of Alzheimer's** – Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan
- **Health Care Directives** – Weber & Gasper Law
- **Importance of staying active** – Forever... in motion
- **Fraud prevention** – Conexus Credit Union Humboldt

**50** attendees | **15** presenters





# The actively aging

## YMCA REGINA AND MOOSE JAW HEALTH CONNECT



The YMCA is a charity that supports connection, friendship and the healthy development of our community. Its programs and services focus on youth and families to support lifelong healthy living. The Health Connect program brings together adults 55+ to improve the navigation of the healthcare system, working to increase individual Health Literacy rates and outcomes through connections to services, health education and evidence-based programs.

**Youth Mental Wellness**  
May 6 - 10, 2024 Hosted by the Community Wellness Collaborative

- Everyday Resiliency**  
Dr. Robyne Hanley-Dafoe  
(Grades 4-6) | (Grades 7-12)
- Compassion and Mental Health**  
Todd Rennebohm  
(Grades 4-6) | (Grades 7-12)
- Mental Mastery**  
Zak Krysak  
(Grades 7-12)
- I Got Mind for Sports and Education**  
Bob Wilkie  
(Grades 4-6) | (Grades 7-9) | (Grades 10-12)
- Anxiety Disorders vs. Anxious Feelings**  
Brit Adam  
(Grades 4-6) | (Grades 7-12)
- Hip Hop Haven**  
Rhodi Gill  
Grades 4-12

This virtual conference is in partnership with:

Since 2022, Saskatchewan Blue Cross has invested in the YMCA of Regina, understanding that healthy communities are prosperous communities and that informed decision-making can improve individual wellness. In 2023, the program expanded to deliver Health Connect in Moose Jaw, empowering more individuals to lead their best, healthy lives.

The YMCA of Regina saw a significant increase in Health Connect programming and participation. Active Aging fitness saw over 330 participants over the course of the year, with several attendees having healthcare backgrounds.

They shared information on topics like public health, mental health, travel health, elder care, first aid and nutrition.

Forever in... Motion saw **581** participants, with an average of **14** individuals staying afterward to take part in coffee and conversation sessions.

Health Connect plans to expand further in Regina, increasing the number of classes at the South Albert location and providing services with Independent Living Facilities.

# SASKATOON COUNCIL ON AGING (SCOA)

## SPOTLIGHT ON SENIORS



The Spotlight on Seniors tradeshow is an annual event hosted by the Saskatoon Council on Aging (SCOA) during Seniors Week in Saskatchewan. As the largest event in the province for older adults, the event is designed to educate and entertain older adults with a wide range of topics. With more than **80** tradeshow booths and exhibits, attendees can learn more about hobbies, investments, careers, education and retirement.

In 2024, Saskatchewan Blue Cross sponsored the event, which included **450** attendees, **460** volunteers, performers and staff and 86 exhibitor tables.

“ The Spotlight on Seniors Tradeshow is a vital event for older adults in Saskatoon, providing an inclusive space to connect with community resources, health services, and social opportunities. The Saskatoon Council on Aging views this annual event as an essential platform for promoting active aging, fostering social engagement, and offering valuable information on aging well. It’s an important occasion for older adults to explore new services, discover volunteer opportunities and stay informed about the latest in health and wellness tailored to their needs. – SCOA ”

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (NAV-CARE)

The Nav-CARE program trains volunteers to help promote quality of life for seniors, offering companionship and emotional support to older adults in Saskatchewan. The program works to match volunteers with individuals who share similar interests, working to connect and deepen relationships within the community.

In 2023, Saskatchewan Blue Cross expanded its partnership with the Saskatoon Council on Aging to help offer the Nav-CARE program, which supports individuals navigating chronic illness and declining health. Currently, there are five Nav-CARE volunteers in the pilot program who help promote quality of life for seniors while lessening the burden on acute care facilities by connecting individuals to resources that can improve their health and wellness.

“ Joining the Nav-CARE program has allowed me to positively support a lovely elderly individual who is navigating some major life transitions. My weekly engagement with my client, her husband and her daughter, each facing unique health challenges, has been beneficial - I believe to us all. Seeing my client's smile of relief when she sees me and receiving appreciation from her family is deeply rewarding. I feel I am a part of her care team and complement the family efforts, also helping them brainstorm on future options for them to determine the next best step for my friend. ”

– Leslie Leach, SCOA Nav-CARE volunteer



# SASKATCHEWAN SENIORS ASSOCIATION INC.

## 2024 CONVENTION

The Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc. (SSAI) is a voice for seniors in the province, meeting with health officials and other officials to raise awareness of seniors' issues. Every year, they host their annual convention for presentations, socializing, networking, discussions, resolutions and more.

**Saskatchewan Blue Cross supports SSAI by providing funding for their convention. In 2024, the event took place over two days with 60 attendees and 15 presenters. Presentations included educational sessions including:**

- Sport, culture and recreation
- Wills and estate planning
- Canadian Red Cross: Friendly Call program
- Hearing Healthcare
- Health directives and advanced care planning
- Chronic pain
- Fall prevention and balance education



Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc. is thankful to Saskatchewan Blue Cross for the financial support for the 2024 SSAI Convention. This funding allowed us to host a full lineup of speakers on a range of topics promoting health and wellness for seniors. Seniors from across the province attended in person, watched online and were able to watch recorded presentations archived on our website. We appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with Saskatchewan Blue Cross to continue promoting Health Literacy for seniors.

– Shannon Wright, Secretary/Treasurer, Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc.



# FOUNDATIONS LEARNING & SKILLS SASKATCHEWAN

Foundations Learning & Skills Saskatchewan (Foundations Learning) assists people in the province by offering learning and skills programs for adults, children and families. For over 45 years, they have provided literacy programs available for free to everyone, working with community partners to meet the specific needs of each community. Doing this, they help individuals gain confidence to empower them to take control of their lives.



Saskatchewan Blue Cross invested in helping develop plain language resources to support Foundations Learning in enhancing Health Literacy at their workshops. These resources were created in collaboration with the University of Saskatchewan Medical student group and addressed the five health conditions most prevalent in Saskatchewan, including:

- Falls
- Cancers
- Respiratory systems disease
- Circulatory systems disease
- Safe pregnancy



Clear communication ensures clear understanding. Over 2,000 brochures were distributed to primary care providers and community partners, with a second print run set for spring 2025. With Saskatchewan Blue Cross' support, we delivered a Clear Language workshop to over 60 University of Saskatchewan medical administrative staff and University of Saskatchewan medical students at no charge.

Intense and collaborative supports are needed for healthy individuals, families, and communities. We are pleased Saskatchewan Blue Cross is helping ensure health professionals and citizens have access to clear language support.

Thank you, Saskatchewan Blue Cross, for helping Saskatchewan gain access to clear health information throughout the province!

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



## Highlights in 2024:

- **4318** individuals attended a Foundations Learning program or event throughout the province.
- There was a **48%** increase in volunteers over the past two years, bringing the total to **257**.
- There was a **40%** increase in programs, training and workshops over the last two years.
- Literacy programs are delivered by **18** staff and **257** volunteers who contribute **46,774** hours annually. This is the equivalent of **24** extra full-time staff.

# SASKATCHEWAN SENIORS MECHANISM

The Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism (SSM) is a non-profit organization that brings volunteers together to contribute to a better quality of life for the province's older adults. Together, they research and act upon issues that affect seniors, providing a unified voice for older adults. SSM partners with member organizations, engaging with and creating awareness of resources and services for seniors in Saskatchewan.



## GRAY MATTERS MAGAZINE

Gray Matters is a SSM magazine published four times annually to help provide older adults in Saskatchewan with a better quality of life. The magazine reaches over **100,000** readers across the province, being sent to senior centres, hospitals, businesses, government, health districts, nursing homes and individual residences. Saskatchewan Blue Cross contributes regularly to the publication, focusing on the quarterly theme and offering ways to improve Health Literacy among older adults.

## SSM ANNUAL CONFERENCE

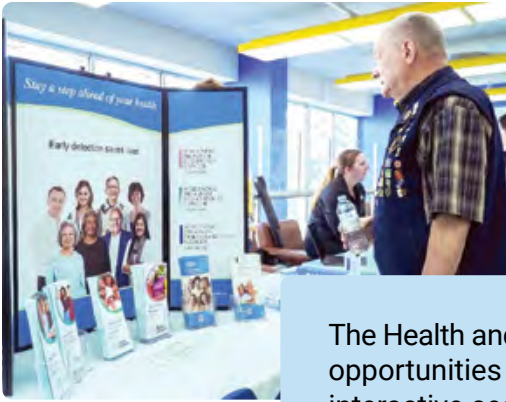
Every year, SSM holds a conference with a theme that focuses on an issue important to older adults. In 2024, Saskatchewan Blue Cross sponsored the event, also providing a presentation in the theme for the year: Social prescribing.

Megan Douglas, Senior VP and Chief Brand and Commercial Officer at Saskatchewan Blue Cross spoke at the event, connecting the importance of social prescribing and Health Literacy. The presentation detailed the importance of Health Literacy, while providing health resource programs and organizations for older adults across the province.



## SOCIAL PRESCRIBING VIDEO

Saskatchewan Blue Cross further supported SSM's social prescribing initiatives by providing financial assistance to create a social prescribing video. The video features medical professionals and resources for older adults to provide to doctors, nurse practitioners and communities as an aid for the organization in building connections.



# REGINA PUBLIC LIBRARY

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS FAIR FOR OLDER ADULTS

The Health and Wellness Fair for Older Adults provides informational and engaging opportunities on health from various community sources. The event included interactive sessions with local health organizations, exercise demonstrations, relaxing massages, hearing tests, a healthy lunch and socializing opportunities.

Funds provided by Saskatchewan Blue Cross helped enable the success of the event, which offered a wide range of community booths that support the health and wellness of older adults. Organizations in attendance included:

- Advance Therapeutic Massage Clinic
- Age-Friendly Regina
- Automobility Medical
- Canadian Club of Regina
- Connect Hearing
- Dog Walking Society
- Eastview Rotary Club Regina
- Mandala Massage
- Nexus Vision Centre
- Nurse Next Door
- RPL Outreach Services
- REACH Regina
- Regina Foot Clinic
- Regina Region Local Immigration Partnership
- Saskatchewan Cancer Agency



The generosity of Saskatchewan Blue Cross made a difference to so many in our community because of this program. Your partnership has meant the world to us.

— Kate Scheurwaer, Director of Development, Regina Public Library



**180** participants attended the event, with **6** volunteers from the Regina Public Library guiding participants and supporting community booths.

### OTHER QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS



Thank you for bringing together all these presenters and displays. There was a lot of useful info. Looking forward to future events.



Thanks to Saskatchewan Blue Cross for supporting this program and lunch/water.



Thank you so much for having Connect Hearing attend. We very much appreciate you thinking of us, and we would love to attend any further programs such as this one very strong turn out!



## AGE-FRIENDLY REGINA



Age-Friendly Regina is part of the worldwide Age-Friendly Communities movement that works in partnership with the City of Regina and other organizations to create age-friendly communities. Volunteers and stakeholders work to help influence policies, programs and plans to help enable everyone to age well and actively in a healthy and safe environment.

After identifying gaps through a survey, Age-Friendly Regina worked to create Guides for Aging Well in Regina. These guides highlighted Mental Health and Wellbeing, Housing Supports and Options, Transportation Options, as well as Crime Prevention and Safety.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross support allowed Age-Friendly Regina to update information in the guides and print additional copies for distribution in the community.



Funding from Saskatchewan Blue Cross has been essential in helping Age-Friendly Regina provide quality information about community supports and resources for older adults. The Aging Well in Regina guides cover key topics like Mental Health and Wellbeing, Housing Supports and Options, Transportation options, Crime Prevention and Safety. With this funding, the guides were fully updated to ensure they offer accurate and current information. It also supported the printing of hard copies, making them accessible to those without internet access or who are less comfortable using technology. The printed guides are shared with a variety of community agencies and public spaces across the city. This initiative strengthens community connections and gives older adults a solid starting point to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.

— Lindsay Bzdel, Age-Friendly Regina Steering Committee





# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Saskatchewan Blue Cross recognizes our important role in Truth and Reconciliation, as well as in fostering culture-based conversations and inclusion for the diverse populations in our province. We are dedicated to advancing Health Literacy and ensuring equal access to health information for all. Our commitment extends to celebrating and supporting the diverse cultures, communities and identities within our province. We believe that fostering an inclusive environment where everyone feels seen, heard and valued is essential to building a healthier Saskatchewan.



# QUEEN CITY PRIDE

The Queen City Pride Festival is Saskatchewan's longest-running festival for gender and sexually diverse communities. The 10-day celebration features events organized by Regina Pride in partnership with local community organizations, including workshops, social gatherings, performances and more. Every event strives to fulfill their mandate to educate, entertain and enlighten.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross proudly extended support once again in 2024, championing voices for equity, equality and diversity. Team members took part in the parade to celebrate, recognize and support Two-Spirit, queer, lesbian, gay, trans, bi and other gender- and sexually-diverse people and their families.

I'd like to thank Saskatchewan Blue Cross for their generous support of the 2024 Queen City Pride Festival. Together, we were able to draw an attendance of almost 10,000 people across the Pride Parade, Out in the Park, Pride After Dark and many other local events across Regina. As we know, there have been many challenges for the Gender and Sexually Diverse community in recent years, and having local support for community members has been a shared goal for both our organizations. We look forward to partnering with Saskatchewan Blue Cross again to celebrate the diversity and pride of our great province. Thank you!

— Aidan Roy, Secretary, Regina Pride Inc.

The 2024 Pride Festival was incredible. It grows every year and it brings me so much joy to see more and more people come out to celebrate who they love, who they are, or their loved ones that are part of the community. It was a tough year for the Queer community with the current political/ social climate and to see the Queen City Pride festival continue to grow in these wild and sad times is so heartening. Everyone is so full of love and happiness during the festival, it is a reminder of such beauty, fun and love. It means so much to me to be part of the community, to be able to take part in this festival and to remind our community that we are here, loved and strong.

— Riviera Bonneau, Co-chair, Regina Pride Inc.



# SASKATOON PRIDE



The Saskatoon Diversity Network Inc. operates Saskatoon Pride, celebrating, recognizing, valuing and supporting Two-Spirit, queer, lesbian, gay, trans, bi and other gender- and sexually-diverse people and their families. The festival featured a wide range of activities, including parades, performances, workshops, art exhibits and social gatherings.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross supported the celebration, which welcomed **32,260** individuals in Saskatoon for activities and events. As champions of equality and diversity, team members joined in on the festivities by walking in the parade.



Wigged Out Productions is a group of folks in Saskatoon who help beginning performers find their place in the world through the art of drag. We do not judge, we support and we build confidence in people who might otherwise suffer from isolation and depression. Through monthly events, we raise funds for Chokecherry Studios, a non-profit group that serves inner-city youth through the arts. Saskatoon Pride has been supportive of our group right from the early days. Through their guidance, promotion, and support, our small troupe has been able to perform for different audiences of families and others. After walking in last year's Pride Parade, we were encouraged to enter a float in 2024 and to attend several events. It gave us all a sense of achievement and belonging and togetherness. We thank important Saskatoon Pride sponsors like Saskatchewan Blue Cross because it makes a difference when Pride is able to produce such happy events like the Pride Parade and the festival in the park.

— Karen Kingston, Coordinator,  
Wigged Out Productions

Saskatoon Diversity Network Inc. (Saskatoon Pride) is heartened by the sponsorship and support of Saskatchewan Blue Cross for the Saskatoon Pride Parade and Festival. Our organization provides safe spaces for the full diversity of our city to be able to feel seen, welcomed and celebrated. The sense of community that is felt in such spaces is essential and much needed to contribute to improved mental and physical health outcomes and we are proud to plan such joyous events. We couldn't do so without the support of Saskatchewan Blue Cross with whom all share the benefits of a healthy city. Being asked to be part of the consultations Blue Cross held earlier in 2024 was a privilege and was a demonstration of the deep sense of service to the province that the organization is dedicated to. We have a wonderful and much appreciated partner in Saskatchewan Blue Cross. Happy Pride!

— Mike McCoy, Co-Chair,  
Saskatoon Diversity Network Inc.



## SPARK YOUR PRIDE

Spark Your Pride is an annual event held in Saskatoon as part of the city's Pride celebrations. Co-hosted by the Western Development Museum and the Saskatoon Pride Festival, this day-long event serves as a vibrant celebration of 2SLGBTQ+ culture, history and community. It provides a safe and welcoming space for people of all backgrounds, including queer seniors, their families and allies.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross is a proud sponsor of the event, helping provide access to activities, including panel discussions, workshops, Indigenous ceremonies, readings, performances and art exhibits. In 2024, **125** individuals took part in their banquet event, while the Western Development Museum had an estimated **850** people come to view displays and educational tables.



Annually, we gather not only to honour the past but to celebrate the resilience, joy and contributions of queer communities in Saskatchewan across generations. Our history is one of struggle, yes, but also of triumph, unity and boundless creativity. This event is an opportunity to share our stories with the larger community. Saskatchewan Blue Cross' support allows us to share our stories within the queer community and with the broader public. This connection is essential to building a shared history that fosters inclusivity and understanding. By bridging our experiences, we create the foundation for greater empathy, respect and unity across communities, while broadening our inclusion as part of our collective history of Saskatchewan.

— Cheryl Loadman, Chair, Spark Your Pride



Attending this event has been eye-opening and deeply moving. Learning about the challenges and triumphs of queer history has given me a new appreciation for the strength and resilience of this community. I'm grateful to be here, not only to support friends but to understand and honour a history that's profoundly important for all of us.

— Spark Your Pride attendee

# PRINCE ALBERT MULTICULTURAL CANADA DAY 2024



The 2024 Multicultural Canada Day event in Prince Albert, organized by the Prince Albert Multicultural Council, was celebrated on July 1 at the Riverbank and drew over **3,000** attendees. This daylong gathering featured a diverse range of cultural performances, including First Nations traditional drumming, French and Métis music, Mexican mariachi, Celtic Irish music and a country music dance finale. Seven cultural food trucks provided a variety of dishes, with notable offerings like Ukrainian poutine, Filipino specialties and Jamaican jerk chicken.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross was a proud sponsor of the event, which kicked off with an opening ceremony that included a prayer led by an Elder and "O Canada" sung in Cree, French and English. Messages from Indigenous representatives and local officials highlighted unity and reconciliation. Children's activities included face painting, arts and crafts and robotics.



“ Congratulations on an amazing Multicultural Canada Day celebration! My son and I were there for the early part (before his bedtime) and we really enjoyed it. I appreciate all the effort you and your team put into making it happen.

– Attendee ”



“ I just wanted to thank you and your staff for another amazing Canada Day. I was away but watched Facebook and tried to take in the fireworks that night when we were back and unpacked ;) I sincerely appreciate everything you do for our city with amazing annual events that showcase our demographics, culture and pride.

– Attendee ”

# WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARDS IN SASKATOON, REGINA AND ESTEVAN

In 2024, Saskatchewan Blue Cross celebrated women across the province by taking part in the Women of Distinction awards hosted by YWCAs in Saskatoon and Regina, as well as Women 4 Women in Estevan.



In Regina, the event celebrated **31** incredible and diverse women within the community. The occasion welcomed **396** attendees and **25** volunteers. Saskatchewan Blue Cross sponsored the night, which featured performances from collective studios and Riva Farrel-Racette, activity stations from local female-owned businesses and the inspiring stories of finalists.

In Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Blue Cross proudly presented the Community Building Award, recognizing women who have had a transformational effect on the local community.

In Estevan, Saskatchewan Blue Cross sponsored the Equity and Inclusion Award, recognizing those who have overcome barriers and made non-traditional contributions to our communities.



Thank you to Blue Cross for your incredible support and partnership in making our Women of Distinction Awards a resounding success. Your generosity and commitment played a key role in creating an unforgettable night filled with inspiration and connection as we celebrated incredible women in Southern Saskatchewan.

— Adrienne Soroka, Manager of Events,  
YWCA Regina

The Women of Distinction Awards was an incredible experience to see so many amazing women celebrated for all of the work they do. The event is a great opportunity to strengthen the network of changemakers in the community. — Attendee

# SASKATOON OPEN DOOR SOCIETY DIVERSITY AWARDS

The Annual Diversity Awards Gala is a multicultural awards event that celebrates workforce diversity. Every year, the Saskatoon Open Door Society strives to work with employers who recognize that Newcomers bring broader perspectives and expertise to the workforce. The Diversity Awards recognize the achievements of companies and individuals that have shown exceptional leadership in workplace diversity and have demonstrated an inclusive attitude toward immigrants.



Saskatchewan Blue Cross is a proud sponsor of the Annual Diversity Awards Gala. As an organization, we are committed to fostering a welcoming, inclusive workforce by helping promote organizations and events that support diverse backgrounds and perspectives that enhance businesses across the province.

**400+**  
attendees in 2024

“ Attending the Annual Diversity Awards Gala was a truly inspiring experience. The evening celebrated not just the incredible achievements of individuals and organizations but also the vibrant diversity that makes our community stronger. Witnessing the passion, resilience and unity of those committed to creating a more inclusive Saskatoon filled me with hope and pride for our city. Thank you, Saskatchewan Blue Cross, for supporting this event.

— Ahmad Majid, Fund Development and Communications Manager, Saskatoon Open Door Society



“ If I am going to describe this event, I can say empowering and inspiring as well.

— Attendee





# Community Health and Wellness

Saskatchewan Blue Cross is dedicated to fostering community health and wellness while participating in and encouraging philanthropy across the province. We invest in partnerships and collaborations with organizations committed to enhancing the health and wellbeing of our residents. Through critical funding and support, we empower those focused on delivering essential health services and promoting volunteerism, helping to build stronger, healthier communities for all.





# Hospitals of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Blue Cross is proud to have a long history of supporting hospitals throughout the province.

## JIM PATTISON CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL RADIOTHON

For 20 years, the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation has raised funds for urgent health care needs in Saskatchewan. Today, it is considered a province-wide signature event and is known as Saskatchewan's largest annual maternal and pediatric fundraiser. In 2024, the fundraising focus was Little Hearts, Little Lungs, with proceeds supporting essential cardiology and respirology equipment at Jim Pattison Children's Hospital.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross is proud to have committed **\$25,000** to the radiothon, supporting children and their families by helping equip hospitals with the essential tools to care for their patients.

Every dollar raised during the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Radiothon is a lifeline for the children and families who walk through the doors of JPCH. Thank you, Saskatchewan Blue Cross, for your generous gift of \$25,000. This contribution is a strong reminder of the power of community and ensures children and moms-to-be have continued access to a world-class facility, regardless of their postal code. Together, we stand beside children and families in their toughest moments, helping them receive the care they need and deserve. This generous support gives hope and health to Saskatchewan kids and families.

— Brynn Boback-Lane, President and CEO, Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation

## ROYAL UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL FOUNDATION EPILEPSY PROGRAM

In 2024, the Royal University Hospital Foundation embarked on a new journey with Saskatchewan Blue Cross with the Saskatchewan Epilepsy Program.

The program provides in-patient care and support for an estimated **10,000** people living in Saskatchewan with epilepsy. Saskatchewan Blue Cross is providing support for the Integrated Wellness Program, benefiting individuals in the province who live with epilepsy and their caregivers. The program provides education, social support and the removal of psychological barriers to promote healthy lifestyles while enhancing quality of life.



# RURAL HOSPITAL FOUNDATIONS COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

In the spring of 2024, Saskatchewan Blue Cross invited rural hospital foundations across the province to apply for funding as part of the Community Investment Program. This program supports health initiatives in rural locations by providing financial assistance for small projects and equipment purchases.



In the summer, over **\$34,000** in funding was provided to various initiatives, including:

- **Biggar and District Health Services Foundation Inc.** – **\$5,000** for an emergency pediatric crash cart.
- **Alex Ositis Foundation Inc.** – **\$4,995** for an Alaris PK Syringe Pump.
- **Grenfell District Health Foundation** – **\$6,000** for a new microscope.
- **Boreal Health Foundation** – **\$7,000** for a lifting tool for patients.
- **Moose Jaw Health Foundation** – **\$9,500** for a pediatric bed.
- **North Central Health Care Foundation** – **\$1,600** for two wheelchairs.

In the fall of 2024, Saskatchewan Blue Cross announced additional funding to the Boreal Healthcare Foundation. The donation supported the purchase of an i-STAT Portable Blood Analyzer and i-STAT printer kit to provide quick and accurate testing at the La Loche Health Centre and Hospital.

The new i-STAT Portable Blood Analyzer is an advanced, easy-to-use blood analyzer that provides healthcare professionals with access to real-time, lab-quality results within minutes rather than hours.

“The Boreal Healthcare Foundation is incredibly grateful for Saskatchewan Blue Cross’s support in providing an i-STAT Portable Blood Analyzer to the La Loche Health Centre. This state-of-the-art device will significantly enhance point-of-care testing, reducing wait times and ensuring that critical test results are available in minutes, not days. For northern communities like La Loche, timely access to diagnostics is crucial for delivering quality healthcare. With this investment, we’re ensuring that residents in Northern Saskatchewan receive timely care, right in their own community.

— Cody Barnett, CEO, Boreal Healthcare Foundation

# HOSPITALS OF REGINA FOUNDATION

## RADIOTHON

For 37 years, the Z99 Radiothon has raised funds for the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) to help provide life-saving technology that enhances the medical team's ability to care for fragile newborns. The NICU provides social workers to mothers and families, ensuring a vital support system that impacts the whole health and wellness of individuals at the most difficult of times.



Saskatchewan Blue Cross proudly committed **\$25,000** to the Radiothon, which broadcasts for 12 hours sharing stories from individuals and families impacted by the generous donations. In total, over **\$511,000** was raised for babies needing Regina's NICU.

Each year, 500 babies need the specialized care provided in our NICU to survive and go home to their families. Our NICU is a centre of excellence as a result of the regular investments by Hospitals of Regina Foundation, thanks to generous donors like Saskatchewan Blue Cross. Their gift of \$25,000 to the Z99 Radiothon will support priority investments in the unit such as a mobile video laryngoscopy to help intubate the smallest babies, providing lifesaving oxygen more quickly and safely.

— Lisa Green, Senior Vice President, Hospitals of Regina Foundation

## URGENT CARE

In 2024, the province opened its first Urgent Care Centre (UCC) with the support of the Hospitals of Regina Foundation. The UCC provides same-day attention to patients with non-life-threatening illnesses and injuries, as well as immediate mental health and addiction support with confidential and discreet services for patients who require urgent care or are in crisis.



As part of its commitment to ensuring whole health and wellness, Saskatchewan Blue Cross provided a **\$25,000** donation to support the new UCC. Since opening its doors in July of 2024, the facility has assisted more than **18,300** patients requiring same-day urgent care.

## 211 SASKATCHEWAN

211 Saskatchewan offers a database of over **6,000** community, social, non-clinical health and government services across the province.

This past year, 211 Saskatchewan has had **233,261** unique site visits with top searches including information on basic needs, mental health and substance use supports, health care, income support, support surrounding violence and abuse as well as information on connecting to surrounding community organizations. A total of **253** communities (towns/cities) have accessed 211 across the province. Saskatchewan Blue Cross helped make this work possible as a sponsor of this essential service.

One of the main portals hosted through the 211 website is the Parent Central portal which provides

a central location for parents to access valuable resources and tools to best support their family. Through Parent Central there have been **21,000** unique visitors which reflects a **162%** increase compared to visits seen in 2022.

In November 2023, 211 Saskatchewan launched the RE:CONNECT Help Line which supports individuals who are at risk of perpetrating violence towards others. Since launching this service, 211 has seen **4,200** unique visitors to the RE:CONNECT portal and has provided over **1,800** minutes of support with **176** unique referrals to community programs.

I cannot express enough how invaluable this platform has been for me. Navigating the complexities of being a new parent can feel overwhelming, but after visiting Parent Central, I've found a reliable resource that provides excellent, ongoing support.

With the wealth of information and resources, I've been able to address various parenting challenges with more confidence. Being able to access the extensive database of articles has truly made a difference in my journey as a parent. – Community member

I was really struggling with stress and guilt for a while. I didn't know where to turn, but then I decided to reach out to RE:CONNECT for help. Talking to the counsellor was such a relief for me. I could finally open up about what I was going through and talk about my relationship issues without feeling judged.

The counsellor reminded me that support in a relationship is important, but they also made it clear that it's ultimately up to each person to choose to be supportive. It made me realize that I have the power to shape my relationships and take control of my own happiness. It was like a weight lifted off my shoulders. Now, armed with this new perspective, I feel more confident moving forward and making choices that will lead to healthier connections with others. – Community member

# UNITED WAY DAY OF CARING

The 24th Annual Day of Caring was an amazing success at demonstrating the power of community and volunteerism. Day of Caring is a day about helping people through acts of local love that strengthen our neighbourhoods and build community.



Saskatchewan Blue Cross participated in Day of Caring, with over 40 team members participating in events organized by the United Way. 9 different projects were tackled, from constructing fences to tilling garden spaces to grow traditional medicines.

The “Oskikamik Three Sisters Garden Project,” in partnership with Quint Development, was included among the nine projects. The project included refreshing the community garden space to provide room for growing a “Three Sisters Garden.” The three seeds included in the garden — corn, beans and squash — represent the most important crops and when planted together, the crops work to help one another thrive and survive.

Staff from Quint Development invited their residents and community members to assist the Day of Caring volunteers in tilling the garden.

This included getting Quint’s youngest resident, a one-year-old boy, involved.

When asking the grandfather of the young boy why it was important for him to see his grandson among the volunteers he commented:

**“This garden reflects our community. The three sisters help each other to grow just like we help each other to grow.”**

Another project was assisting Str8Up in developing a sacred garden in which they could grow traditional medicines to be used within Str8Up’s healing circles. Str8Up supports youth and adults who have lived criminal street lifestyles and are looking to make positive changes in their lives. An important step in Str8Up’s programming is supporting healing through traditional ceremonies and customs.

This garden will not only nurture the spirit of our members and staff but also the surrounding community. Our goal is to provide as many traditional teachings and plants as possible.

— Str8Up staff member

# TAMPON TUESDAY

Menstrual hygiene products are one of the most requested yet least donated items at food banks and shelters. Tampon Tuesday aims to change that. Since 2017, the event has been a staple in the Saskatoon and surrounding communities, helping distribute nearly **26,400** packages and period products to **91** unique organizations, schools, groups and events.

In 2024, Saskatchewan Blue Cross donated the equivalent of **207** packages of products, helping create a total of **1,419** packages of menstrual supplies and raising **\$9,300** to support local agencies, schools and community services in providing adequate supplies for their community members. **27** unique organizations, agencies and schools received **3,450** packages of period products estimated at nearly **\$19,000**.

“ I would like to express our gratitude for your generous donation of menstrual products for our event. Thanks to your support, the event was a great success, and we were able to make a meaningful impact in our community by providing essential supplies to those in need. — Tampon Tuesday Recipient ”

# UNITED WAY ESTEVAN

The United Way Estevan is dedicated to supporting youth in the community. Recent University of Saskatchewan research indicates that nearly 1 in 5 youth have suicidal ideation and 1 in 4 report needing mental health support. With only 13% receiving the help they need and 38% experiencing a decline in mental health in recent years. Visible minorities also experience nine times the risk of negative life changes.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross assisted the United Way Estevan to help change these statistics, providing funding to allow them to access the Natural Supports Simulation ([naturalsupportsimulation.com](https://naturalsupportsimulation.com)). This online tool allows individuals to learn supporting skills to help build trust and relationships to support a child or youth.

“ The Natural Supports Simulation is an incredible resource for our community. It allows participants to step into different scenarios and have genuine conversations, helping everyone to better understand the unique challenges that young people encounter. By exploring various roles and concerns, this simulation not only helps individuals develop their skills but also fosters a more caring and informed community that is committed to supporting our youth. It allows people to learn at their own speed, in private, or in a classroom setting. — Laura Melle, Director of Operations, Envision Counselling and Support Centre Inc. ”

“ We greatly appreciate the support from Saskatchewan Blue Cross as it has allowed United Way Estevan to access this valuable resource for our community. It is our mission to positively impact the quality of life in our community and knowing that many individuals, including many youth, in our community face mental health challenges, we are looking forward to the positive impact that developing natural supports within our community will have on the community as a whole. — Heidi Hesselink, Executive Director, United Way Estevan ”

# UNITED WAY ANNUAL SASKATCHEWAN BLUE CROSS EMPLOYEE GIVING CAMPAIGN



The annual United Way employee campaign invites team members to take part in payroll deductions that are matched by the organization to support United Way of Regina and United Way of Saskatoon & Area.

In 2024 alone, Saskatchewan Blue Cross raised **\$12,557** through employee contributions, which were reinvested directly back into local communities.



Every day I am amazed, inspired and thankful for the dedication and commitment of our agency partners, their staff teams and volunteers. The love and commitment to helping people every day is what keeps me hopeful and humbled in the work I do.

At United Way, we are proud to support this important work. Thanks to our generous donors, corporations, local businesses, trade unions and individuals, United Way in partnership with local frontline agencies helps to build a better community for everyone.

By working together, taking care of one another, helping those we know and don't know, we can and do change peoples' lives. We can help and support all who are vulnerable and struggling in our community when we are united in our efforts.

— Sheri Benson, CEO, United Way of Saskatoon and Area



# CMHA Saskatoon – In the Spotlight



In March of 2024, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) of Saskatoon hosted their annual In the Spotlight event. This event highlighted the Family Matters Program, which provides one-on-one support for over **125** family members who have loved ones affected by mental health and/or substance abuse issues.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross sponsored the event once again this year, honouring the individuals who enable the CMHA. The night also allowed CMHA Saskatoon to highlight the impact of their critical programming and services, celebrate resilience and thank generous supporters.



“

When I hang out with families I feel loved and supported. I might be having a bad day and another person might be having a good day. It gives me hope.

– Family Support Group attendee

”

“

The In the Spotlight event is a celebration and an opportunity to say thank you to our supporters. This year it honoured families. Families, in all their diversity, are the glue that holds us and our communities together.

– Faith Bodnar, Executive Director,  
CMHA Saskatoon

”





# Heart Safe Program

The Saskatoon Heart Safe Program (Public Access Defibrillation) is a community program aimed at providing rapid access to defibrillation in case of Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA). Their goal is to make AEDs as common as fire extinguishers, providing units to businesses and community locations to help save lives.



In 2024, Saskatchewan Blue Cross renewed its three-year agreement with the Heart Safe program to support a community coordinator. This coordinator visits each Heart Safe location every year to ensure AED machine compliance. With over **1,300** Heart Safe locations in Saskatoon and surrounding communities, the number one risk is that when an AED is pulled off a wall the battery is dead or the electrode PADS have expired. The Community Coordinator ensures this risk is mitigated by visiting each location and doing a full audit of every AED.

“ The Saskatoon Heart Safe Program values the partnership with Saskatchewan Blue Cross, thanks to their long-standing partnership with the Heart Safe Program we have saved 41 lives. These are 41 individuals (ranging from 36 years old – 72 years old) that have went back to living a normal life with their loved ones. — Troy Davies, Director, Saskatoon Heart Safe Program ”

# Ronald McDonald House Charities® Saskatchewan (RMHC-SK)

## ADOPT-A-ROOM

Saskatchewan Blue Cross is a proud supporter of Adopt-A-Room with RMHC-SK, helping ensure that families are provided the comforts of home while their child is undergoing medical treatment.



**Adopt-A-Room**

**The Durocher Family**  
259 Nights Stayed  
Île-à-la-Crosse, SK

Guest Room #205  
Saskatchewan Blue Cross

"My name is Sydney, my boyfriend's name is Cory and our daughter's name is Layna.

Our first experience with RMHC-SK occurred when our daughter was first born, she was very sick at the time and we were staying at a hotel prior because we thought we would be going home soon but unfortunately, that wasn't the case so we were referred to the Ronald McDonald House. When we first got there, I was thinking how beautiful the house was, how clean the rooms were and how amazing and friendly the staff were.

Living and staying at the RMHC-SK was so good for us because it was so close to the hospital, the Home for Dinner program was such a life saviour because after being at the hospital all day I was never in the mood to cook. We stayed at the house for 285 days, it was our home away from home and we would have been there longer but due to our daughter's medical condition, we had to relocate to Saskatoon. Leaving the Ronald McDonald House left me with feelings of gratitude and acceptance of our situation. I'll always consider the RMH our home away from home because they were there for us when life had knocked us down and they helped us get back up.

So thank you RMHC-SK, I'll forever be grateful."

**"Leaving the Ronald McDonald House left me with feelings of gratitude and acceptance of our situation."**

### *The Durocher family: 285 nights*

My name is Sydney, my boyfriend's name is Cory and our daughter's name is Layna. Our first experience with RMHC-SK occurred when our daughter was first born, she was very sick at the time and we were staying at a hotel prior because we thought we would be going home soon but unfortunately, that wasn't the case so we were referred to the Ronald McDonald House. When we first got there, I was thinking how beautiful the house was, how clean the rooms were and how amazing and friendly the staff were. Living and staying at the RMHC-SK was so good for us because it was so close to the hospital, the Home for Dinner program was

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# HOUSE PARTY

As the Family sponsor, Saskatchewan Blue Cross also supported the House Party event in Saskatoon. This fundraising event connects individuals and Ronald McDonald House families from across the province to hear stories of hope and gratitude.



**3** House Party events were held in Saskatoon, Regina and Prince Albert

**598** attendees at all 3 House Party events

**8** Live Chef demonstrations at all three events

**\$330,000+**

raised through all 2024 House Party events

# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



Since 2013, Saskatchewan Blue Cross has supported and acknowledged the value and impact our volunteers play as a critical role in the mission of RMHC-SK. Our partnership ensures we are able to thank our volunteers for the work they do in providing essential programming and support for families caring for their sick child.

The importance of our partnership allows Saskatchewan to express our gratitude to volunteers for their time, commitment and compassion, to honour their accomplishments, share their impact,

support continued learning and build a strong, diverse community.

In 2024, with Saskatchewan Blue Cross sponsorship, we hosted two appreciation events that brought together 98 volunteers and two learning opportunities that supported the work and well-being of our volunteers.

We want to say THANK YOU for your ongoing commitment to our Volunteer Program, and for supporting the spirit of volunteerism across our province.

— Deanne, Volunteer Program, RMHC Saskatchewan



# Big Brothers Big Sisters Saskatchewan

Big Brothers Big Sisters Saskatchewan is a non-profit organization that provides mentorship programs for children and youth across the province. It is part of the larger Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada network, which aims to help young people reach their full potential by fostering supportive, one-to-one mentoring relationships. These programs pair children, known as "Littles," with adult volunteers, called "Bigs," who serve as positive role models. The mentorships are designed to build confidence, encourage personal growth and inspire young people to pursue their goals.



Thank you, Saskatchewan Blue Cross, for your investment in mentorship. Your support of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatchewan's mentor recruitment campaign has helped us create life-changing relationships for children and youth facing adversity, across the province. Together, we are igniting the power and potential of young people.

— Amy Mohr, Director of Development and Communications, BBBS of Regina and Area

In September of 2024, Saskatchewan Blue Cross supported a province-wide recruitment campaign to raise awareness of Big Brothers Big Sisters Saskatchewan and encourage more volunteers to sign up as a "Big". Team members also took part in a virtual Lunch N' Learn to promote involvement in the campaign within the organization and learn more about the value the Big Brothers Big Sisters Saskatchewan brings to the province.

**Total Saskatchewan mentor applications during the campaign: 135**

## Story from a recently approved mentor

Alishba applied to volunteer with BBBS in September after seeing a recruitment campaign. Inspired by the positive impact a mentor had on her childhood friend, she decided to offer the same support to a youth. After completing the intake process, she was matched with Penny on October 24, 2024.

Their connection has grown quickly, with shared interests in art, movies and trying new things. Alishba appreciates Penny's curiosity and how comfortable their conversations

feel, while Penny values Alishba's reliability and their shared love of drawing. They've already enjoyed a movie outing and are excited to see Moana 2 when it's released.

Penny describes her time with Alishba as fun and uplifting, while her caregiver, Jessica, praises the positive bond between them, highlighting Penny's excitement and happiness after their visits. Jessica notes that their relationship feels like a genuine friendship, with strong communication and mutual respect.

# Make-A-Wish Saskatchewan



Make-A-Wish Trees of Joy is a magical event that brings together local volunteers and donors, wish kids and their families to make more wishes come true. Supporters sponsor a tree and are paired with wish kids to create a special tree just for them.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross team members came together in 2024 to help decorate trees for wish kids and their families once again this year. **15** team members took part in decorating trees for children. Over **100** donors came together to decorate trees for wish kids and their families, creating magical masterpieces for the holiday season.

“ The looks of joy on the kids faces showed it all and Saskatchewan Blue Cross did not disappoint – could have some professional decorators in your company! Thanks for all you do!  
– Stacie Lawson, Manager, Development, Make-A-Wish Canada ”



# National Philanthropy Day

Each year, hundreds of communities across North America come together to recognize the countless ways philanthropy has made a difference. The Association of Fundraising Professionals of Saskatoon Chapter proudly recognizes and celebrates the individuals and organizations that strengthen communities through generosity with the annual National Philanthropy Day luncheon.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross is the proud sponsor of the Youth in Philanthropy award at this event. In addition, we were humbled to be recognized by STARS Air Ambulance with the Honoured Supporter Award in recognition of its contributions over the years. Saskatchewan Blue Cross is proud to be a longstanding ally of STARS, contributing funds and countless volunteer hours to events like Ride the Hangar since 2013.



As Co-Chair of the 2024 AFP Saskatoon Chapter's National Philanthropy Day luncheon, I am thrilled to reflect on the remarkable success of our event held on November 14, 2024, at Prairieland Park. This year's luncheon was a powerful celebration of philanthropy, uniting community leaders, supporters and passionate individuals dedicated to making a difference.

We had the privilege of honouring eight inspirational individuals and organizations in the Youth in Philanthropy category and 29 incredible honorees in the Honoured Supporter category. These remarkable individuals and groups have profoundly impacted our community. Their stories of generosity and commitment to social causes inspired all attendees and underscored the essential role philanthropy plays in fostering a vibrant society.

Our keynote speaker, Véronique Loewen, captivated the audience with her insights and experiences as a dedicated philanthropist. Her extensive volunteer work across various local organizations showcases her unwavering commitment to giving back. Véronique's journey not only motivated us but also reinforced the importance of collaboration in addressing community needs.

The luncheon served as a platform to showcase the incredible initiatives happening in Saskatoon. From youth engagement programs to support for marginalized groups, we are witnessing transformative efforts that uplift our community. The recognition of honorees through awards highlighted the collective impact of individuals and organizations working tirelessly for positive change.

— Miren Luczka, 2024 NPD Luncheon Co-Chair



# One Small Step

One Small Step is a free online resource run by volunteers to assist individuals in discovering local charities in Saskatoon. The website lists non-profits and charities, their impact, as well as volunteer opportunities and ways for people to get involved.

With funding assistance from Saskatchewan Blue Cross, One Small Step has been able to add **68** new not-for-profit organizations to its website. An estimated **1,500** individuals visit the website every month.

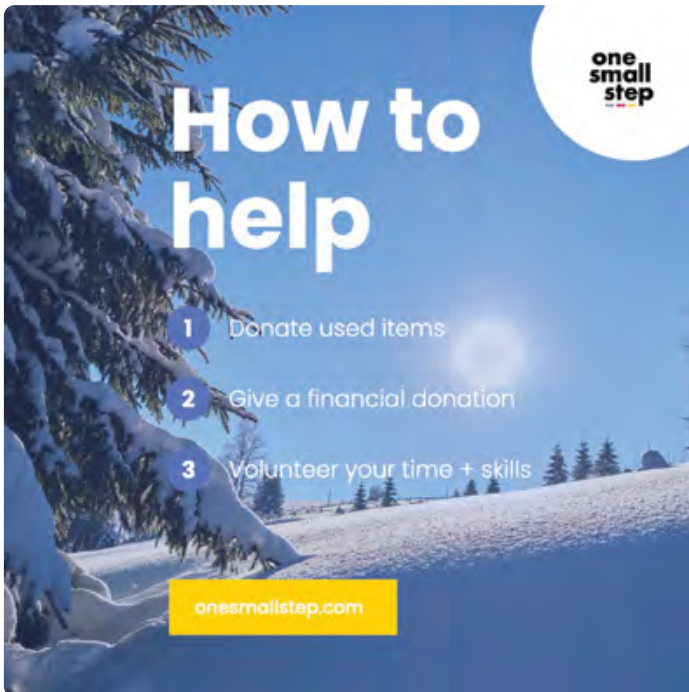
**14%** of the website's visitors are daily active users, while **43%** are monthly active users.

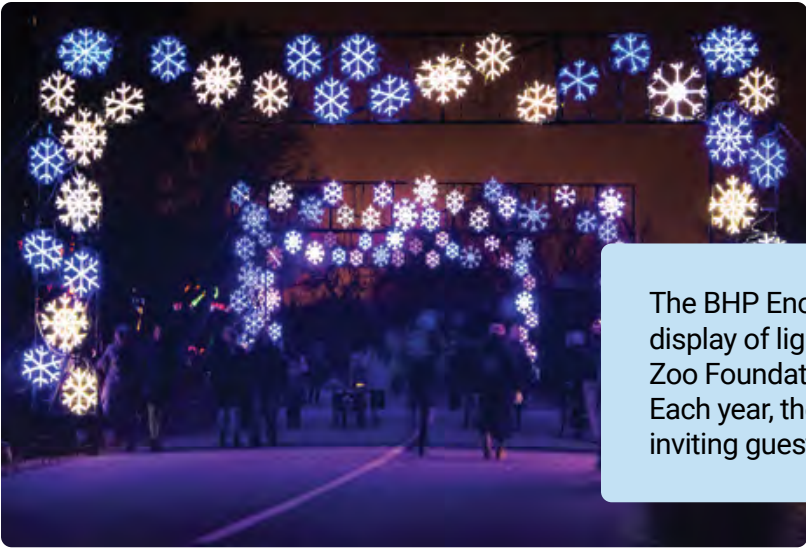


Saskatchewan Blue Cross has been instrumental in helping One Small Step grow and make a meaningful impact in our community.

Their support has enabled us to expand our reach, empower local charities, and create opportunities for positive change in Saskatoon. Together, we've touched countless lives, fostering a stronger, more connected community where everyone has the chance to thrive.

— Gregg Bamford, Co-founder and Chair, One Small Step





# Enchanted Forest

The BHP Enchanted Forest is an annual drive-through display of lights with proceeds supporting the Saskatoon Zoo Foundation and Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation. Each year, the Enchanted Forest offers a Light Walk, inviting guests to walk through the display for two nights.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross proudly sponsored the Light Walk once again in 2024, with **25** team members volunteering to hand out hot chocolate and candy canes while welcoming visitors to the warming centre.

“ We are so grateful to have Saskatchewan Blue Cross as our walk night sponsor. A chance for families to get out in the fresh air and enjoy the walk, hot chocolate and the team at Saskatchewan Blue Cross is such a treat. Thank you for your gift to the Saskatoon Zoo Foundation and the Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation through the BHP Enchanted Forest.  
 — Steve Shannon, Chief Executive Officer, Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation ”



**THURSDAY NIGHT**

**6,000** people

**FRIDAY NIGHT**

**11,000** people

**TOTAL RAISED FOR BOTH NIGHTS:**

**\$36,000**





# Food Banks

In 2024, Regina opened the BMO ASAHTOWIKAMIK Food Hub, a unique design that is the first of its kind in Canada. Providing programming and diverse food choices, the hub is designed to look and feel like a grocery store to reduce stigma, where their 25,000 clients can choose food for their families for free. In Saskatoon, the Food Bank & Learning Centre is working to expand its facility to bring all its programs and services under one roof, allowing it to better serve the 23,000 people who access its services monthly.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross is proud to be a long-time supporter of both the Saskatoon and Regina Food Banks, donating **\$5,000** to both food banks to invest in and raise awareness of their programs and services. Funds for the Regina Food Bank supported their new hub, while in Saskatoon, the donation supported the expansion of their new facility. In addition to providing monetary donations, team members at Saskatchewan Blue Cross collected non-perishable items to donate and participated in educational presentations on the Food Banks and their initiatives.



“When we feed our neighbours, we feed hope and create a healthier community. Thank you to the Saskatchewan Blue Cross team for giving a hand-up to those in need.”  
— David Froh, Vice President of Regina Food Bank



“At Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre, we believe that building a food-secure community is a shared responsibility. Contributions like those from Saskatchewan Blue Cross and their employees play an important role in that effort. Every donation helps us support the well-being of our community and we're so appreciative of Saskatchewan Blue Cross's support.”  
— Laurie O'Connor, Executive Director, Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre



# STARS Critical Care on the Air

STARS is a not-for-profit organization that provides emergency medical transport for critically ill or injured patients across Western Canada. Since 1985, they have provided critical care with a network of highly skilled professionals with a passion for saving lives and helping shape the future of critical care.



The annual STARS Critical Care on the Air Radiothon is broadcast across **39** radio stations in Saskatchewan to raise funds for their operations in the province. Over two days, communities can immerse themselves in stories from patients, STARS flight crew and community allies. Saskatchewan Blue Cross proudly supported the radiothon in 2024, taking part in a Matching Hour with a **\$5,000** donation.

The giving, however, did not end there. Saskatchewan Blue Cross also promised to donate for each instance of the use of the hashtag #STARScareontheair on social media. As a result, Saskatchewan Blue Cross donated an additional **\$10,000** towards the radiothon, recognizing the importance of STARS and the profound impact they have on communities across the province.



On behalf of everyone at STARS and the communities we serve, thank you to Saskatchewan Blue Cross for being apart of our Critical Care on the Air Radiothon. The support from this radiothon will ensure that we have the fuel in our tanks and the tools in the hands of our crew to be there for the next patient in need. STARS was built for the community by the community and we believe where you live – or work, play and travel – shouldn't impact your chance of survival.

– Tammy Beaugard, Director of Development, Manitoba and Saskatchewan STARS



# MS Walk

The MS Walk is a community-driven fundraising event that brings individuals across Canada together to raise awareness of multiple sclerosis and support MS Canada. In Saskatoon and Regina, walkers registered to show their support for friends, family and Canadians who are impacted by MS.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross has been a proud supporter of the event for over 30 years, continuing our commitment as the community-level and checkpoint sponsor of the Saskatoon Walk and the check-in and checkpoint sponsor at the Regina Walk. Team Blue proudly participated in the events, walking, volunteering and participating in a virtual lunch and learn with MS Canada.

In Saskatoon, volunteer team members handed out snacks and water at the checkpoint for walkers. In Regina, volunteers also took part as checkpoint sponsors, as well as assisting at the check-in for walkers at the event. In Saskatchewan, **551** people took part in the Walk for MS.



“It's truly inspiring to see so many SK Blue Cross staff participating and engaging in our MS Walks. Their dedication and support make a real difference for the MS community and we're so grateful to have SK Blue Cross as a longtime partner and sponsor.  
— Quyn Larson, Community Fundraising, MS Canada”



# Giving Tuesday

Saskatchewan Blue Cross proudly announced its commitment to fighting food insecurity for Giving Tuesday 2024. Working with local organizations, Saskatchewan Blue Cross supported initiatives to ensure families have access to nutritious meals and essential resources.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross's contributions included financial support and hands-on volunteering with community organizations dedicated to ensuring no one goes hungry.

In Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Blue Cross team members rolled up their sleeves and volunteered during breakfast and lunch services at the

Saskatoon Friendship Inn. Additional support was provided in Regina, with funding for Souls Harbour Rescue Mission and the Nēwo-Yōtina Friendship Centre to assist in meal services for vulnerable individuals. Provincially, Saskatchewan Blue Cross also donated to the Food Banks of Saskatchewan, including the Regina Food Bank and the Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre.



“The reality of a growing number of vulnerable people in our community translates to greater need for the Friendship Inn’s daily Free Meal Service. We are grateful to Saskatchewan Blue Cross for once again lending their commitment and support of the Inn and our mission to offer food and friendship to vulnerable people here in Saskatoon. You are helping us prepare and share over 1,200 meals every day.”

— Sandra Kary, Executive Director, Friendship Inn



# Synergy 8 Pediatric partnership

Synergy 8 is a group of community builders who are committed to working with local groups and organizations to provide leadership in community engagement and develop innovative strategies for community development. In 2024, Synergy 8 hosted the Drive for Kids campaign, raising funds to purchase a portable ultrasound machine for the Saskatoon Tribal Council Health Bus.



Saskatchewan Blue Cross sponsored one of the holes at the tournament, which had an incredible turnout of **250** golfers and **840** attendees at the dinner. The event also welcomed PGA Tour star Adam Hadwin and Hollywood actors Kim Coates and William Fichtner.

The ultrasound machine will be an addition to the dental team and mental health support workers, travelling four days a week to First Nation Communities to offer key services. An additional **\$200,000** was raised at the event to fund the capital and operating costs of a five-year pilot program.

The new ultrasound machine is expected to travel through seven different First Nation communities on the Saskatoon Tribal Council Health Bus, focusing on the treatment of maternal fetal health and elders.

“ The Saskatoon Tribal Council Health Bus has been a huge success in our First Nation Communities providing outcomes and results for dental and mental health. Thanks to major partners including Saskatchewan Blue Cross, we will see the addition of an ultrasound machine in the bus!

— Mark Arcand, Tribal Chief ”

# Advisor Community Investment Program

## YOUR VOICE, YOUR CHOICE PROGRAM



Saskatchewan Blue Cross is dedicated to making a meaningful difference in Saskatchewan Communities. As part of the annual Your Voice, Your Choice program, **\$30,000** in funding was distributed to local organizations across the province.

Community investment is a core identity of Saskatchewan Blue Cross. For the past four years, they have welcomed members to participate in the Your Voice, Your Choice program, allowing them to shape contributions by voting for organizations dedicated to advancing health, wellness and reconciliation across Saskatchewan.

The Your Voice, Your Choice program reflects our commitment to supporting what matters most to our communities. By listening to members and funding the organizations they believe in, together we help create healthier, stronger and more connected communities across the province.

### Six organizations benefitted from the program in 2024, including:

- **Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan**
- **SaskAbilities**
- **Saskatoon Community Foundation – Community Fund for Reconciliation**
- **South Saskatchewan Community Foundation – The Truth and Reconciliation Fund**
- **Friendship Inn – Saskatoon**
- **Nēwo-Yōtina Friendship Centre – Regina**

“ We are honoured to be the recipients of the funds raised through the Your Voice, Your Choice program. Reflecting on the shared values and efforts between the Saskatchewan Blue Cross and SaskAbilities, it is easy to see common threads that weave through our respective organizations. While our approach looks different, both organizations are working towards more inclusive, equitable and accessible spaces for all. We both value the people we serve, the communities we serve them in are rooted in the belief that everyone is deserving of respect, honesty and compassion. We sincerely thank the Saskatchewan Blue Cross for their support and dedication to this important work.

– Andy Livingston, President, SaskAbilities

# Awards



For the past eight years, Saskatchewan Blue Cross has been recognized as one of Saskatchewan's Top Employers. As a leading provider of health and wellness solutions, we are proud to invest in and empower communities on their journey to health and wellness. Our employees are dedicated to furthering this commitment through their work and by promoting social change.



In 2024, Blue Cross Life was named Canada's Most Respected Life Insurance Company for the third consecutive year. This underscores our unwavering commitment to delivering outstanding service to our clients.



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

## Networks we're *involved* with

### EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION NETWORK

This network promotes equity, diversity and inclusion by sharing best practices and fostering unity. Members are provided access to a diverse network and opportunities to share resources, best practices and participation to collaborative events and initiatives such as National Indigenous Peoples Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross joined the network in 2023, enabling us to collaborate and strengthen our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. As a member, Saskatchewan Blue Cross proudly works to participate, share insights and engage in respectful, inclusive communication to foster collaboration and openness, helping build inclusive, thriving communities.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross will continue working towards annual goals in collaboration with the Chamber to advance these priorities and ensure sustained progress on its Indigenous Engagement Strategies.

### INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT CHARTER SIGNATORY

In May 2024, Saskatchewan Blue Cross signed the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce's Indigenous Engagement Charter, formalizing our commitment to reconciliation and Indigenous economic empowerment. The Charter is built on four key pillars:

- 1. Indigenous education and training:** Enhancing workforce understanding of Indigenous history and culture.
- 2. Indigenous HR and retention:** Strengthening recruitment and retention strategies for Indigenous employees.
- 3. Indigenous procurement:** Establishing partnerships with Indigenous-owned businesses.
- 4. Indigenous community engagement:** Developing comprehensive community engagement strategies.

# Employee Giving

Saskatchewan Blue Cross employees are dedicated to enriching and bettering the lives of their friends, neighbours and communities across the province. In 2024, the Employee Giving program was enhanced to allow team members to select a health and wellness-focused CRA-registered charity or organization provincially recognized to which Saskatchewan Blue Cross donates \$250 on their behalf.

In 2024, **\$44,000** was donated to **67** different organizations across the province, including:

- Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan
- Autism Services of Saskatoon
- Canadian Mental Health Association - Saskatoon Branch Inc.
- Canadian Mental Health Association (Saskatchewan Division) Inc.
- Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan Inc
- Care & Share Saskatoon Inc.
- Carmichael Outreach Inc.
- Creative Options Regina Inc.
- Crohn's and Colitis Canada
- Elrose Health Care Auxiliary
- Empty Arms Perinatal Loss Support Services
- Family Fertility Fund of Saskatchewan
- Food Banks of Saskatchewan Corporation
- Foundations Learning & Skills Saskatchewan
- Global Gathering Place Inc.
- Habitat for Humanity Saskatchewan
- Haven Family Connections Incorporated
- Healing to The Max
- Hope Restored Canada
- Hope's Home Incorporated
- Hospitals of Regina Foundation Inc.
- Inclusion Saskatchewan Inc.
- Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation Inc
- Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation
- The Kidney Foundation of Canada - Saskatchewan Branch
- KidSport Canada - Saskatchewan Branch
- Lung Saskatchewan Inc.
- MADD Saskatoon
- Make-A-Wish Foundation of Canada
- Meewasin Valley Authority
- MS Canada SP Canada
- OUTSaskatoon Inc
- Ovarian Cancer Canada
- Parkinson Canada Inc.
- Prairie Harm Reduction Incorporated
- Regina & District Food Bank Inc.
- Ronald McDonald House Charities Saskatchewan
- Royal University Hospital Foundation Inc.
- Sandra Schmirler Foundation
- Sask. Valley Hospital Foundation Inc.
- Saskatchewan Abilities Council
- Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Inc.
- Saskatchewan Epilepsy Inc.
- Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation
- Saskatoon Downtown Youth Centre Inc.
- Saskatoon Food Bank Incorporated
- Saskatoon Friendship Inn
- Saskatoon Open Door Society Inc.
- Sexual Health Centre Saskatoon Inc.
- Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service Foundation
- Sofia House
- St. Paul's Hospital Foundation
- Suicide Grief Support Saskatoon Inc.
- Teens Talk Mental Health Advocacy Inc.
- The Bridge on 20th Fellowship Centre Inc.
- The Health Foundation of East Central Saskatchewan
- True North Aid
- Truly Alive Youth and Family Foundation Inc.
- United Way of Saskatoon and area
- Weyburn & District Hospital Foundation Inc.
- Saskatoon Family Young Men's Christian Association
- YWCA Prince Albert Inc
- YWCA Saskatoon Inc



# COMMENTS/QUOTES FROM PARTNERS:

“ Thank you so much from all of us at RMHC-SK for your continued support. We cannot do the work we do without the generous support from community partners such as Saskatchewan Blue Cross. Please pass along our gratitude to your entire team!  
— Karen Linsley, Director of Development and Communications, RMHC Saskatchewan ”



“ Donations like these are something that really helps support organizations like ours. We are very happy to hear that your employees believe in our mission.  
— Deneca Quesnel, Hope Restored Canada ”





“ Saskatchewan Blue Cross's donation to our organization underscores their commitment to community support. We're grateful for their inclusion of employees in such initiatives, fostering a culture of compassion. Thank you, Saskatchewan Blue Cross, for your partnership and dedication to our community.

— Laurie O'Connor, Executive Director, Saskatchewan Food Bank & Learning Centre ”

“ Hope's Home is incredibly thankful to the Saskatchewan Blue Cross for selecting us for their Employee Giving Program and the employees who chose to donate to Hope's Home. With the Saskatchewan Blue Cross's ongoing support, we are able to bring medically inclusive child care to our communities, allowing kids with complex medical needs to learn, grow and thrive.

— Lisa Wyatt, CEO, Hope's Home ”


“ Thank you so much for sharing this terrific news, we're very grateful to receive your donation. On behalf of the Friendship Inn and the guests who rely on our services, please accept our gratitude.


— Laura Herman, Development and Engagement Manager, Friendship Inn ”




# Contact us


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



