

WORKPLACE WELLBEING REPORT 2025

Insights on workplace health from the employee perspective





The following report examines employee perceptions, priorities and experiences concerning workplace wellbeing. By understanding these perspectives, organizations can better align their wellbeing strategies with what truly matters from the voice of employees:

Creating environments that drive both individual performance and organizational success.





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A message from our CEO

In spring 2025, we released a report called 'Creating a high performing work force: The importance of a wellbeing strategy'. That report shared insights from a comprehensive benchmarking survey undertaken by Alberta Blue Cross of 250 organizations. But that report only told half the story.

To truly cultivate a culture of wellbeing in the workplace, it's critical to engage your team members. That's why we're back with a follow-up report diving deep into the perspectives of those who our wellness strategies are designed



to support—your employees. This report shifts the focus to employee voices, recognizing that effective wellness strategies are co-created with shared input and shared accountability—and are ultimately and inherently a vital part of your organization's culture.

The bad news is that we've uncovered a clear gap between employer intentions and employee experience.

The good news is that understanding employee sentiment will enable you to make smarter, aligned investments that will increase your team's performance, strengthen retention and enhance engagement.

Although many organizations are invested in their people's wellbeing, 72% of employees feel uninformed about these efforts. In contrast, when a clear and cohesive strategy is in place, 89% of employees feel their wellbeing is genuinely valued.

As you review this report, I encourage you to consider the following questions:

- 1. If you reflect on what matters most to your people today, what would change about your wellbeing strategy?
- 2. How is the disconnect between intention and experience impacting trust, engagement, and performance in your organization?

At Alberta Blue Cross, we applaud the commitment to workplace wellbeing that has brought you to reading this report today. And we welcome the opportunity to collaborate with you as we work together to enhance wellbeing across workplaces in Alberta and beyond.

Mark Komlenic

President and CEO, Alberta Blue Cross®
Proud Alberta Blue Cross team member

Introduction

Last year, we created a first of its kind, Alberta-focused survey to capture employer perspectives on how they're prioritizing and investing in employee wellbeing. We learned that organizations with cohesive wellbeing strategies experienced significantly higher engagement, productivity and retention.

This year, we're flipping the perspective to hear directly from employees: What aspects of wellbeing matter most to them at work right now? How well are their employers supporting these needs?



How to use this report



HR leaders

Employee sentiment is a **leading indicator of retention risk, burnout and inclusion gaps.** Understanding your team's genuine needs transforms wellness from a checkbox to a strategic priority. When you know what your people need, you can build the culture and capability to meet them there—and keep them.

Use these insights alongside your own to shape your workforce strategy, inform talent development and strengthen succession planning.

Senior executives

Wellbeing is more than a support program, it's a signal of **organizational strength.**Our findings show that prioritizing employee wellbeing directly results in higher trust, stronger performance and enhanced change readiness.

Use these insights to shape your leadership agenda, embed accountability measures and invest in culture as a strategic asset.

Plan administrators

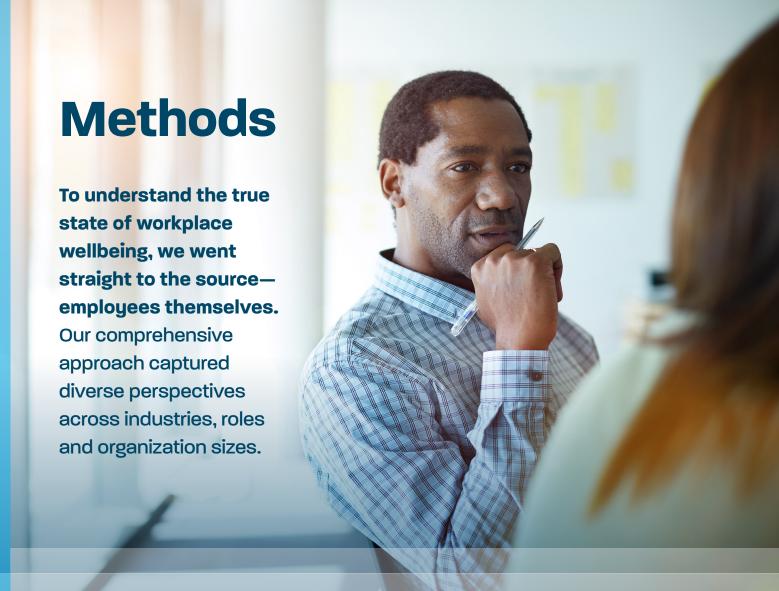
Benefits are only valuable if they're relevant and evolve with your workforce. **Employees are telling you what they need:** Mental health supports, flexibility and inclusive offerings.

Use these findings to compare against your employee needs and conduct a benefits gap analysis at your organization. Work to realign your offerings to meet the evolving priorities of a diverse workforce.

Wellbeing champions

This report reveals that when employees feel supported by a cohesive wellbeing strategy, 81% become advocates. **You don't need a formal title to lead change.**

Use this data to build your case, engage with peers across departments and co-create initiatives that resonate and make a meaningful impact across your organization.



Survey snapshot





20⁺ industries represented

Data collected April 2025

About our data

Last year, we surveyed 250 employers in Canada to learn how a strong wellbeing strategy could improve their business. This year, we repeated the survey with employees to see where organizational priorities and efforts are aligned with employees' needs and where they can improve.

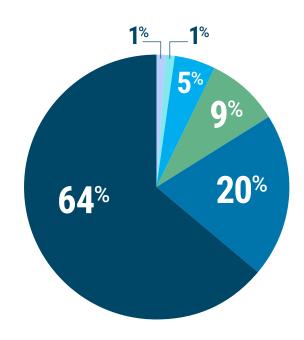
Demographic data

The respondent profile represents a diverse cross-section of the Canadian workforce. We collected 2,000 responses from employees across Canada, including 1,500 from Alberta over a two-week period in April 2025 to gather the most current information from their perspective. Most of the people who answered the survey (78%) work full-time. More than half (57%) were women and 43% were men.*

Respondents worked across all organization sizes, ranging from enterprise with over 1,000 employees to small businesses with less than 49 employees. Most employees (70%) work in a non-unionized environment.

Employee roles surveyed

- Employees without supervisory duties
- Managers and supervisors
- Other role like consultant or business owner
- Senior executives
- Interns and students
- Preferred not to answer



^{*}Less than 1% of respondents identified as gender diverse.

Key industries sampled

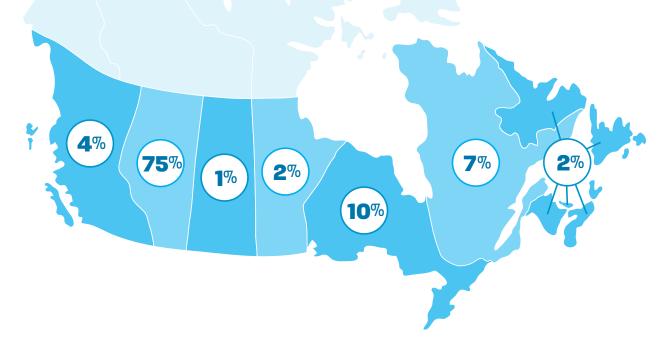
15 %	13 %	12 %	8 %	
Health care	Service and retail trade	Educational services	Professional, scientific and technical services	
7 %	6 %	5 %	4 %	
Construction	Financial services and insurance	Travel, tourism and hospitality	Technology and telecommunications	
4 %	4 %	3 %	3 %	
Transportation and warehousing	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	Manufacturing and trades	Mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction	
3 %	2 %	2 %	2 %	
Utilities	Wholesale trade	Information and cultural industries	Municipalities	
1 %	1 %	1%	4 %	
Automotive	Real estate	Chemicals	Other	

This broad industry representation ensures that our findings are relevant across various sectors.

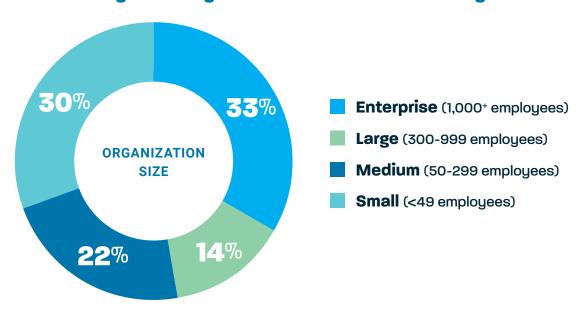


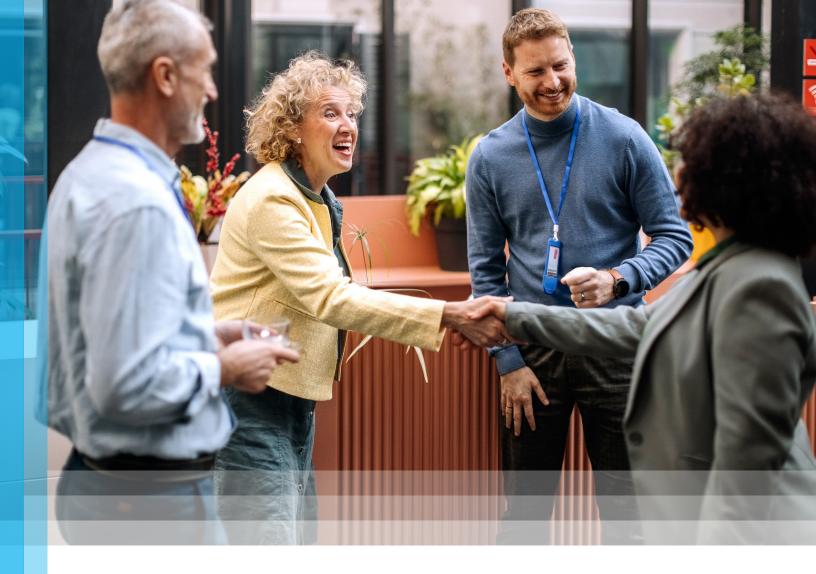
Geography

The map below demonstrates the percentage of survey respondents with a focus on Alberta-based companies, while representative across Canada.



We've categorized organizations into four size categories





Setting the stage

Defining a healthy workplace culture

Alberta Blue Cross® clients are sharing with us that they want real, practical ways to boost their employees' wellbeing. They understand why it matters but can find it tough to make it a cohesive part of their workplace culture.

While mental and physical health are important to employees, working in a healthy workplace culture is essential.

A healthy workplace culture is a work environment where people feel **safe**, **supported and valued**, leading to organizational wellbeing. >

What is organizational wellbeing?

Organizational wellbeing is founded in practices, policies, processes and relationships that create a supportive and healthy work environment.

Five key dimensions make up the foundation for a healthy workplace:



This dimension isn't just about the absence of physical illness. It focuses on how organizations prioritize and promote healthy lifestyles through policies, programs and resources that create healthy work environments.



Mental wellbeing

Mental wellbeing means building a workplace where people feel supported, can access mental health help, speak up without fear and manage stress at work.



Fostering purpose

A sense of purpose comes from connecting individual roles to meaningful work and providing growth opportunities. When employees see how their work contributes to the big picture, they feel more valued and engaged in their workplace.



Fostering collaboration

Creating a sense of belonging means adding support for an inclusive work environment. Inclusive environments promote team collaboration and resilience, which impact employee retention and engagement.



Leadership commitment and buy-in

Leadership support is the foundation of success for any wellbeing initiative as it demonstrates support and appreciation for their teams and people. When leaders prioritize and model wellbeing, it sets the tone for the entire organization.



When leaders genuinely support employees, encourage collaboration and help people find purpose in their work, organizations experience transformative success.

THE WELLBEING BLUEPRINT:

Culture drives success

Employers across Canada already invest in employees' physical and mental wellbeing through various programs and benefits. While these remain essential pillars, our findings show that it's the **workplace culture** that has the greatest impact on individual wellbeing.

Organizations with healthy workplace culture offer cohesive, well-promoted wellness programs. They integrate wellbeing as a core value through leadership practices, collaborative environments and purposeful work. This complete approach creates a **multiplier effect** where

traditional benefits become more impactful when delivered within a supportive cultural framework.

When leaders genuinely support employees, encourage collaboration and help people find purpose in their work, organizations experience transformative success.



- It reveals how employees, particularly in Alberta, experience stress, workload and leadership support—helping leaders identify where current wellbeing efforts are missing the mark.
- It uncovers gaps between what employers think they're providing and what employees truly experience. Programs alone aren't enough if they're not visible, valued or supported.
- Some organizations are questioning the value of their wellbeing investments.^{1,2} Our findings clarify why programs fall short, and what to do about it today.



Bottom line:

Understanding employee sentiment is critical for making smarter, more aligned decisions that maximize the impact of your wellbeing strategy.



Findings >

The strategy gap: Where culture drives real impact

In our 2024 survey, nearly half (45%) of employers reported having a clear wellbeing strategy. Yet 72% of employees say their organization either lacks this strategy or they're simply unaware of one—despite nearly 80% saying wellbeing is important or very important to them.



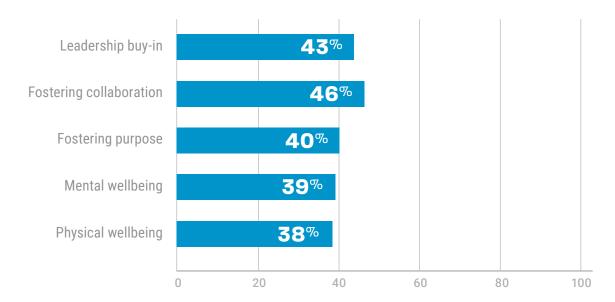
When my organization is invested in me as a person, in addition to as an employee by supporting my needs and wellbeing, I will be set up to perform well and with passion [at work]."

Workplace wellbeing: Why culture matters most

Nearly half (46%) of employees indicate mental health initiatives are the major focus of wellbeing initiatives in their organization. While having companies support physical and particularly mental health is important to 29% of these respondents—it's not enough. What matters to nearly 40% of employees is working in a culture where leaders make the effort to encourage connection and collaboration, to improve the employee experience and for the organization to support leaders in enhancing wellbeing on their teams.

Confirming this finding, employees were supportive of the cultural and relational factors (fostering collaboration, purpose and leadership commitment) to a greater extent than the individually focused, traditional mental and physical health initiatives:

PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES SUPPORTIVE OR HIGHLY SUPPORTIVE ACROSS DIMENSIONS



We can also see, in the presence of a cohesive wellbeing strategy, the amplifying effect where a greater percentage of employees are supportive and highly supportive across all dimensions.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT WITHOUT AND WITH A COHESIVE STRATEGY

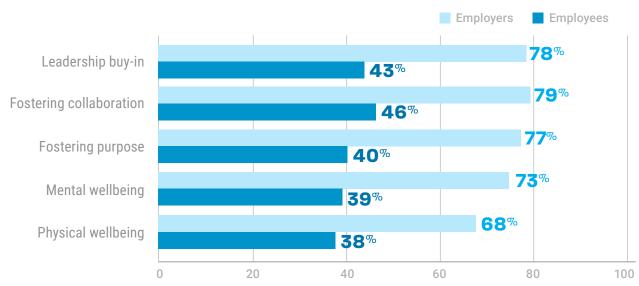


The takeaway:

Cultural and relational factors (leadership buy-in, collaboration and employee experience) consistently rank higher than traditional health pillars, revealing that workplace culture serves as a wellbeing multiplier.

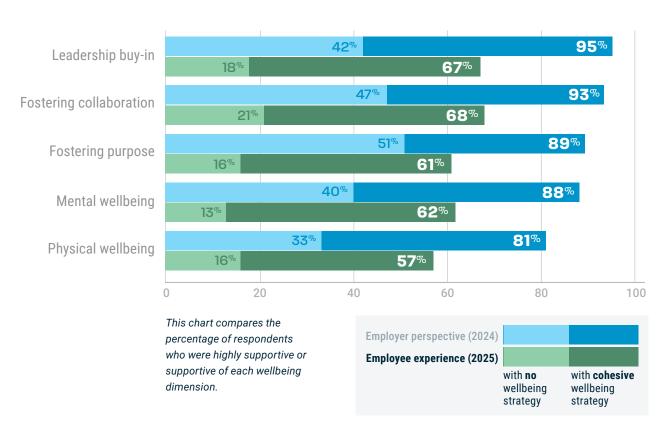
Although a greater percentage of employers were supportive or highly supportive of the drivers of wellbeing than employees, that support did not necessarily translate into initiatives that matter most to employees (with 50% of those having a strategy in place) to enable the environments in which they can thrive.

ORGANIZATIONAL VS. EMPLOYEE SUPPORT ACROSS WELLBEING DIMENSIONS





The contrast between our 2024 employer data and 2025 employee responses proves this point: When organizations have a cohesive wellbeing strategy, both employers and employees become significantly more supportive of all wellbeing dimensions.



Why this matters

Without a clear wellbeing strategy, the numbers tell a challenging story:

Only

3%

of employees feel supported during organizational change Just

13%

of employees feel confident they can adapt when change occurs

Only

3%

of employees feel supported with work-life balance A mere

2%

of employees feel supported with burnout prevention

The hidden costs are significant.

When employees lack support and confidence in themselves and their leaders, organizations face increased absenteeism, reduced productivity and the substantial financial impact of losing talented employees.^{9,10}



The trust transformation

When leaders genuinely invest in wellbeing strategies and model them for their teams, employees become more empowered and engaged. Our data reveals a critical insight into the power of strategic commitment.

The evidence is clear: Only 67% of participants believe their employer acts in their best interest— yet this jumps to 89% where a clear wellbeing strategy is in place.

The collective commitment from leadership creates a workplace culture where wellbeing isn't just a program, but a fundamental way of operating. It transforms wellbeing from a checkbox exercise to a **lived value**.

HIDDEN COSTS OF MISALIGNMENT

Even with the best intentions, many employer initiatives fail to address employees' most critical needs. Without current insights to guide strategic direction, wellbeing efforts can:

- Create missed opportunities for meaningful engagement and retention
- Erode trust in leadership and organizational culture
- Diminish the return on wellbeing investments

Understanding and responding to employee sentiment is not optional—it's essential for creating a truly supportive workplace. ALBERTA BLUE CROSS LAYLOYEE WELLBEING REPORT 2025

Employee priorities are shifting

Our findings show that employee expectations are changing. While physical and mental health benefits remain important, employees today are focused on their experience:

- How they feel at work each day
- Whether they feel connected to their team and company
- If their work has meaning and purpose
- Whether they feel safe and supported both socially and financially

The takeaway:

A focus on workplace culture and supporting leadership, in addition to wellbeing initiatives, is what drives real trust and impact across the organization.

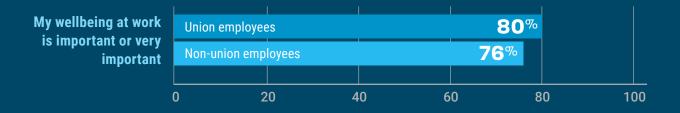
Take action now



- Start with employee voices: Engage employees in co-creating solutions to ensure efforts reflect real needs and priorities. Show your team you're listening.
- **Develop a cohesive strategy:** Connect programs to broader cultural and business goals.
- **Equip leaders for accountability:** Hold leaders responsible based on employee engagement and perceptions of support, not just productivity metrics.
- Close the feedback loop: Measure and act on feedback regularly to adapt and optimize over time, maintaining relevance.

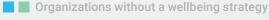


Union and non-union perspectives



Our findings reveal how unionized and non-unionized employees experience workplace wellbeing. While both union (80%) and non-union employee groups (76%) overwhelmingly agree that workplace wellbeing is important, in union environments, far fewer feel their employer supports them in meaningful ways.

Where organizations are seen as **lacking a** wellbeing strategy:

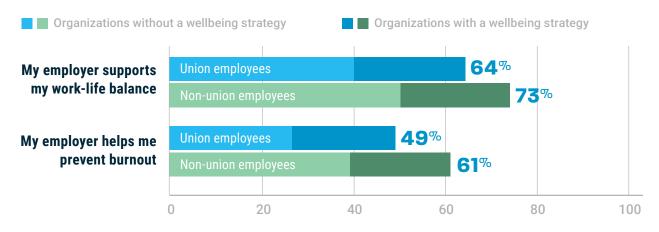




Only **40**% of union and **50**% of non-union employees feel supported in work-life balance.

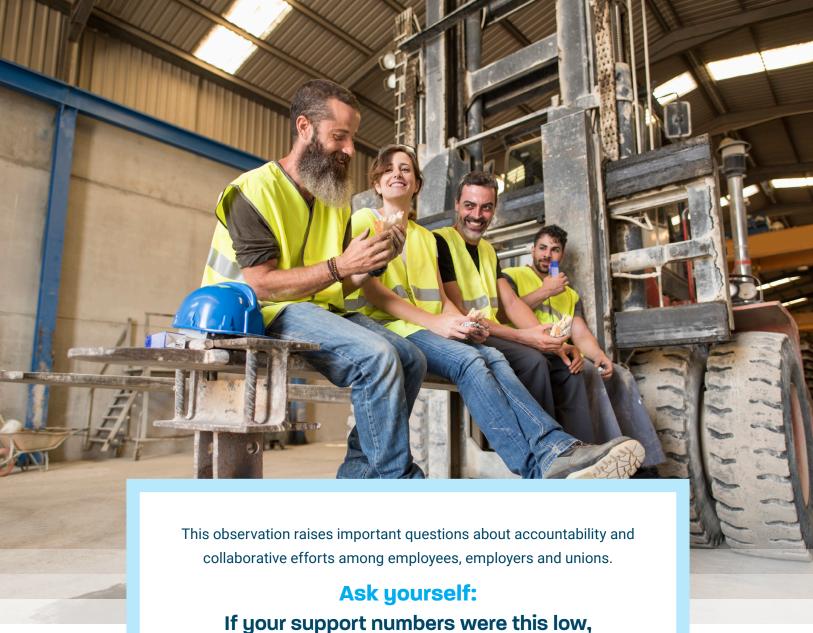
Just **27**% of union and **39**% of non-union employees say their employer helps them prevent burnout.

However, the presence of a **cohesive wellbeing strategy makes a clear difference:**



Work-life balance support rises to **64**% (union) and **73**% (non-union).

Burnout prevention improves to **49**% (union) and **61**% (non-union).



If your support numbers were this low, would your employees say you're doing enough?
What would it take to close this gap?

While wellbeing is important to most employees, 60% of unionized workers report feeling unsupported in work-life balance and 73% lack support for burnout prevention.

This gap highlights the need for collaborative strategies that ensure all employees feel supported, without placing the full responsibility on any single group.

Bridging connections for a wellbeing network

A successful wellbeing network requires active collaboration between employees, employers and unions. Organizational wellbeing advisors play a crucial role in connecting these stakeholders with external resources, creating a comprehensive support ecosystem that addresses employee needs.

The takeaway:

A comprehensive approach to wellbeing demands shared accountability. Our findings show that collaborative efforts between employees, employers and unions can boost engagement, trust and satisfaction by up to 24%—transforming workplace culture.



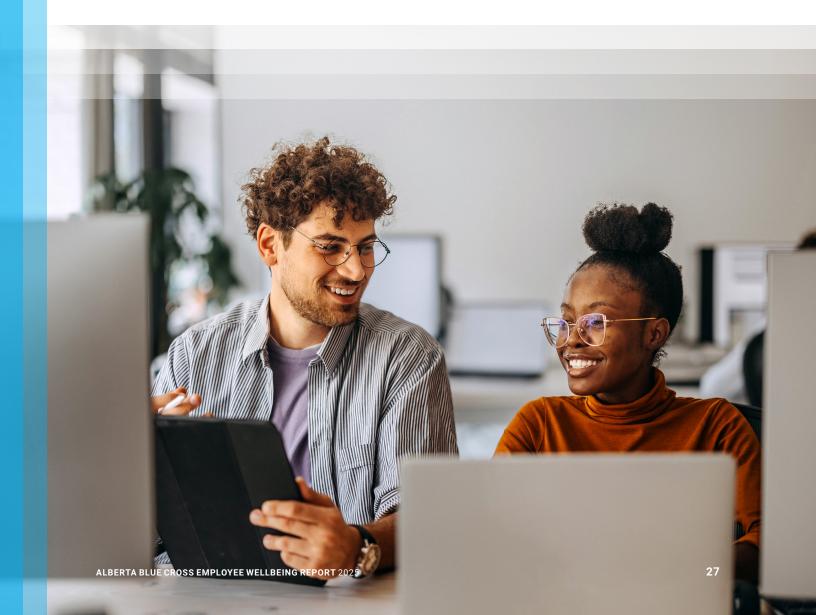
Take action now

- Collaborate on training: Co-design workshops that combine union insights, employer expertise and wellbeing advisor's resources.
- Share resources: Create an integrated resource hub that combines wellness tools from employers, wellbeing advisors and unions.
- Amplify union perspectives: Involve union representatives directly in wellbeing strategy development and decision-making processes.
- Close the feedback loop: Establish a responsive system that turns employee input into visible workplace improvements.

Supporting employees with chronic conditions: A growing priority

Beyond medical accommodations

While health benefits matter, employees with chronic conditions prioritize mental health support and inclusive workplace cultures at nearly the same rate as physical health accommodations.



What matters most to employees with chronic conditions

Building these collaborative wellbeing networks becomes particularly crucial when we examine the specific health challenges facing today's workforce. Our survey reveals a significant workforce health trend:

While 80% of employees rated their health as good, very good or excellent—nearly half (44%) of respondents said they live with a chronic health condition.

This trend aligns with Canadian health data and highlights an urgent need for inclusive workplace strategies. Statistics Canada notes that chronic health issues are becoming more common in the workforce, driven by demographic shifts and evolving health patterns.^{5,6}

Despite the high prevalence of chronic conditions, our survey exposes a strong opportunity for improvement: Only 50% of affected employees feel their wellbeing is genuinely prioritized by their employer.

When asked about the most critical wellbeing initiatives to support employees managing chronic conditions, the respondents prioritized their needs as follows:

38 %	Supporting mental health and wellbeing
20%	Fostering collaboration and an inclusive environment
18%	Supporting physical health and wellbeing
18%	Improving the employee experience
5 %	Supporting executives and people managers to enhance the wellbeing of teams

Respondents who selected "I'm not sure" or "Prefer not to answer" are not included in these values.

Meeting the needs of a changing workforce

Our data and national trends both point to a rise in chronic illness among employees—driven in part by an aging workforce. This demographic shift requires employers to rethink wellbeing strategies to support employees throughout their career lifecycle.

The takeaway:

With nearly half of employees managing chronic conditions, workplace wellbeing must extend beyond health care access. It requires creating an inclusive and stigma-free culture where everyone feels valued, supported and empowered to contribute meaningfully.

Take action now



- Audit workplace accessibility: Review physical spaces and remote work policies to ensure accommodation for various health needs.
- Normalize flexibility at work: Implement flexible scheduling and adaptive workloads that accommodate health management and remove the stigma around adaptive work styles.
- **Empathetic leadership training:** Create specialized programs to help managers support team members with chronic conditions while maintaining privacy and dignity.
- Holistic benefits review: Ensure health plans provide chronic condition management, focusing on prevention, support and long-term wellness.

Gender perspectives on wellbeing

Uncovering shared priorities and diverse needs

Our survey reveals both important similarities and differences in how people across gender identities experience workplace wellbeing. Understanding these patterns helps organizations focus on shared, high-impact priorities while tailoring inclusive approaches where needed.



Common ground: Mental health matters to everyone

More than 1 in 3 employees, regardless of gender, prioritize mental health support above all other workplace benefits. With 37% of women and 35% of men ranking this as their top need, mental health is your workforce's biggest shared priority.

Greatest potential gains: Building trust

Our data reveals a significant trust gap: **72% of men** trust their employer's wellbeing commitment, compared to **63% of women**.

This 9% trust gap represents one of the greatest opportunities for improvement. When trust increases, participation in wellbeing initiatives rises and outcomes improve. Focusing on transparent communication and visible leadership commitment can help close this gap.

Where priorities align and differ across gender identities

Here's a closer look at the specific wellbeing initiative priorities reported by our respondents:

		Women	Men
8	Supporting mental health	37 %	35 %
	Fostering collaboration and an inclusive environment	22%	16%
***	Improving the employee experience	18%	22%
	Supporting physical health	17 %	21%
ng h	Supporting executives and people managers to enhance wellbeing of teams	6 %	6 %

Less than 1% of respondents identified as gender diverse.



How gender shapes health and workplace priorities

Understanding wellbeing across genders helps create more inclusive, effective strategies:

- Mental health is a shared priority, showing its critical role in today's workplace.
- Women and gender-diverse employees prioritize **collaboration and inclusion** more (22% vs. 16%), signaling the need for programs that foster **connection and teamwork**.
- Men prioritize physical health
 (21% vs. 17%) and improving the
 employee experience
 (22% vs. 18%) slightly more.
- Improving the employee experience matters to all, with both men (22%) and women (18%) wanting workplaces where they feel valued.

The takeaway:

Wellbeing isn't one-size-fits-all.

Differences in trust and priorities show that inclusive, effective strategies must be built on transparency, shared mental health support and tailored efforts that reflect what's most valued: Connection, inclusion and a better day-to-day experience at work.



Take action now



- Build trust through transparent communication and consistent follow-through on wellbeing commitments.
- Create collaborative spaces that support inclusion while also enhancing individual experience.
- Measure effectiveness by gender identity to ensure your strategy works for everyone.
- Lead with mental health initiatives as your foundation for all employees.





Which comes first:

Employee wellbeing or productivity?

A common misconception positions wellbeing and productivity as competing priorities—a zero-sum game where investing in one means sacrificing the other. Our findings dismantle this assumption:

Participants with a clear, well-defined understanding of their organization's wellbeing strategy are 56% more likely to trust their organization and demonstrate significantly higher engagement levels.

Previous employer feedback revealed that many felt pressured to prioritize productivity and profitability before being able to invest in employee wellbeing:



Those who want to climb the corporate ladder seem to forget the people on the ground floor. They worry about sales and hitting goals rather than the health of the workers."



We still have shareholders with expectations."



[There is] a blatant disregard for the wellbeing of employees and a sole focus on increasing productivity and profit at any cost."



The reality: Wellbeing drives a high performing workforce

Employees have made it clear that wellbeing is not a luxury—it's essential for productivity:

Wellbeing is good for me—and the healthier I am, the better able I am to [do] good for the organization."

Wellbeing matters to me as an employee because when I feel good, mentally, physically and emotionally, I can focus better, stay motivated and do my best work."

A supportive and healthy workplace serves as the foundation for driving productivity and engagement. Organizations with cohesive wellbeing strategies confirm this relationship: Prioritizing employee wellbeing creates a positive cycle where health and performance mutually reinforce each other. Understanding this wellbeing-performance connection becomes even more critical when we examine how to build these effective strategies in practice.



Key takeaways

What can you expect from an investment in employee wellbeing?

Our survey findings demonstrate that organizations that invest in employee wellbeing see measurable returns through a more driven, resilient and productive workforce:

94%

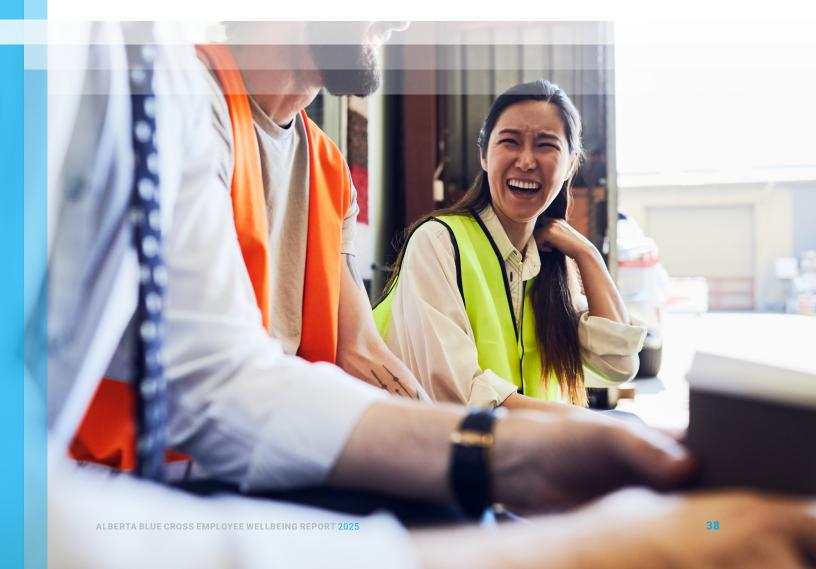
A strong majority (94%) feel more resilient and well-equipped to adapt to organizational change.

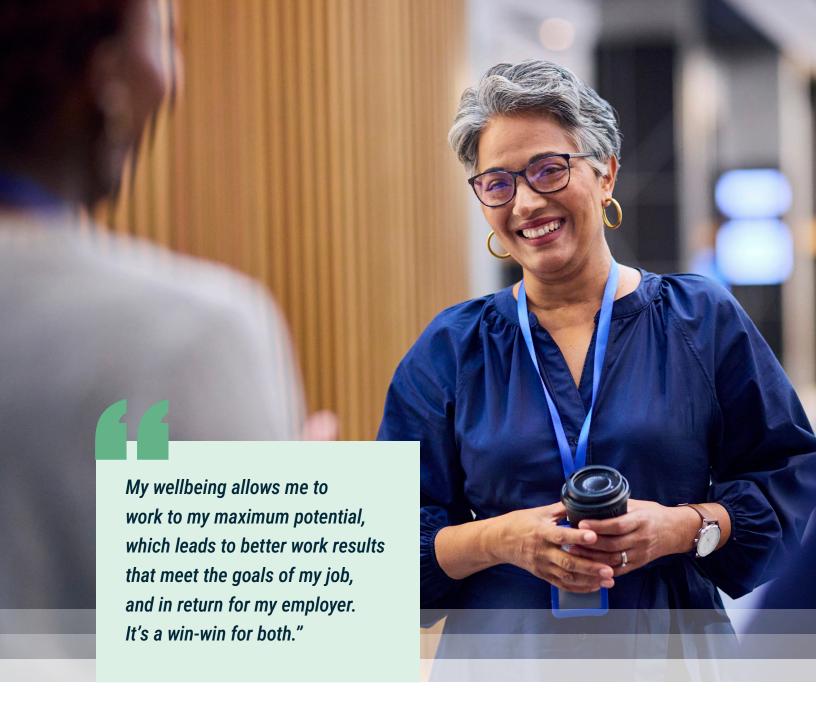
85%

More encouraging, 85% feel their organization supports a healthy and safe workplace.

81%

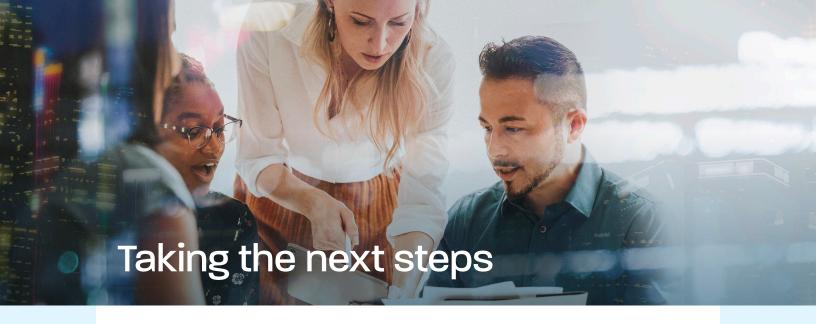
Most telling, 81% of employees would recommend their employer to others, demonstrating overall satisfaction with their workplace.





Resilience during times of change is a crucial element of employee wellbeing. It enables adaptability, innovation and agility, allowing employees to navigate change effectively. On the other hand, if employees struggle to manage their workloads or feel disconnected from their team members, they may lack the capacity to embrace change and push for growth within the organization.

By recognizing the connection between wellbeing and productivity, employers can create a workplace where both employees and organizations thrive.



1 Are you clear on what matters most for your employees today?

When was the last time you uncovered an insight about employee sentiment that genuinely surprised you? To close the gap between what employers intend and what employees experience, organizations must make employee sentiment the starting point—not the afterthought—of wellbeing strategy.

Take action: Use engagement surveys, listening sessions and pulse checks to regularly capture how employees feel about their experience.

Use case example: When surveys revealed employees felt disconnected from leadership, one of our clients introduced monthly "Ask Me Anything" sessions with senior leaders to address real concerns directly and transparently.

2 Are your leaders genuinely committed to championing employee wellbeing?

Employees notice when leaders are truly invested in their health. Equip leaders to actively support wellbeing, and hold them accountable based on employee perceptions, not just output.

Managers can remove the stigma from mental health by normalizing the use of available resources and vacation time. They can regularly discuss work-life boundaries with their teams and model healthy behaviours.

Take action: Are mental health and personal boundaries genuinely respected? Incorporate "wellbeing leadership" into your management evaluation process and include mental health training for your team.

3 Are productivity metrics masking wellbeing challenges?

Employees see wellbeing as essential to productivity, not a perk. How do you quantify the invisible cost of employee burnout and disengagement? To keep teams engaged and high-performing, employers must shift from viewing wellbeing as optional to treating it as foundational for long-term success.

Take action: Include wellbeing metrics alongside productivity KPIs in regular business reviews and leadership evaluations.

Use case example: Track both productivity metrics and wellbeing indicators (like stress levels, engagement scores and burnout risk assessments) in regular performance dashboards. This makes wellbeing equally visible in business reviews and connects it directly to outcomes. Tracking absenteeism rates alongside engagement scores can reveal early warning signs before productivity drops.

4 Who's designing your wellbeing solutions?

Involve employees early and often to help shape your strategy. When your people help to design the solutions, they're more likely to trust, use and benefit from them—and more likely to believe the organization truly cares.

Take action: Establish a wellbeing committee with representation across departments, roles and demographics to guide program development and implementation. This approach helps organizations identify their most pressing wellbeing needs and develop relevant solutions that people will use.

5 Do employee voices drive real change?

Show employees that their voices lead to action. How do you demonstrate that employee voices create meaningful change? Communicate what's changing, why it matters and how it reflects what employees have shared. This builds trust and deepens engagement.

Take action: Create structured, closed-loop feedback cycles that translate employee input into visible workplace improvements. Communicate regularly about what's changing and why, based on employee feedback.

6 Is your wellbeing strategy integrated or isolated?

Revisit, renew and communicate a clear, people-centred wellbeing strategy. Move beyond isolated programs by aligning wellbeing efforts with a broader cultural and business strategy. Ensure employees understand how these efforts connect to their day-to-day experience.

Take action: Develop a comprehensive wellbeing strategy document that clearly connects initiatives to business goals and employee needs. Review it regularly with pulse surveys to ensure continued relevance.

When you're ready, Alberta Blue Cross® can help you move forward.

Our team of experts can assess where you compare to other organizations and employee perspectives, provide strategic guidance and support along with a range of services to position your organization as a leader in workplace wellbeing.

Contact us at <u>wellness@ab.bluecross.ca</u> to learn more.



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About Alberta Blue Cross®

Alberta Blue Cross[®] is the largest benefits provider in Alberta and one of the largest in Western Canada. We serve more than 1.8 million members with coverage through more than 5,000 small and large employer group plans, individual plans and government-sponsored programs. We believe we have the potential and responsibility to impact people's lives for the better. We believe all communities should thrive and we are committed to serving as a champion for wellness by promoting the health of Albertans.

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