



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 23, 2020

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Text4Hope program launched to support Albertans’ mental health

The lives of Albertans look different right now. As we navigate through COVID-19, words like “unprecedented” and “isolation” are the norm and can be taxing on the mental wellness of Albertans. That’s why Alberta Blue Cross, through its community foundation, is partnering with Alberta Health Services and the Mental Health Foundation to launch Text4Hope—a program that will send daily Cognitive Behaviour Therapy based text messages to any Albertan in need of tips to cope with the mental stress of social-distancing.

Beginning today, Albertans will simply need to text COVID19Hope to 393939 to receive daily text messages on how to focus on healthy thinking or actions to help them manage their mood. The program is expected to serve thousands of Albertans over the next three months. While this program doesn’t replace other mental health therapies such as medication or face-to-face therapy, it will provide daily support, advice and suggested actions designed to build adaptive coping skills and resiliency.

“We recognize these are challenging times that call for each of us as individuals and organizations to do whatever we can to support our neighbours and our communities,” says Alberta Blue Cross President and CEO Mark Komlenic. “This is an important time to think about how we can support each other in new ways—such as the Text4Hope Program.”

Alberta Health Services and the University of Alberta suggest that 10 per cent of Albertans will need mental health support during the COVID-19 crisis.

"Though the current crisis mandates social distance, it's clear that we must continue to find new ways to support and connect to each other so we can nurture our mental health. We're all in this together. We're grateful to have the support of Alberta Blue Cross as we launch this timely service", says Mark Korhuis, President & CEO of the Mental Health Foundation.

About Text4Hope

Text4Hope bridges a much-needed mental health gap for Albertans by providing three months of daily Cognitive Behavioral Therapy based text messages, written by mental health therapists. Evidence-based and research-supported, the approach is empowering, leading to greater emotional control, and anxiety, stress and depression reductions of as much as 25 per cent. Under the leadership of Dr. Vincent Agyapong, Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Alberta, Text4Hope builds on proven technology solutions used in Alberta in support of mental health and wellness.

About Alberta Blue Cross

As an Alberta-based, not-for-profit organization, Alberta Blue Cross covers more than 1.8 million Albertans and has a unique focus on supporting the health and wellness of Albertans. Alberta Blue Cross is ranked as one of Alberta’s Top 10 Most Loved Brands, as well as one of Alberta's Top 25 Most Respected Organizations.

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