



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Alberta Blue Cross® partners with the Alberta Women's Health Foundation on Inspire Inclusion campaign to raise awareness of historic gaps in women's health care

In recognition of International Women's Day, Alberta Blue Cross is partnering with the Alberta Women's Health Foundation on a campaign to raise awareness of the gaps that continue to exist in women's health. International Women's Day is being recognized globally on March 8 with a theme of *Inspire Inclusion*—a call to collectively forge a more inclusive world for women.

"Unfortunately, significant gaps persist in investments in women's health research," says Brian Geislinger, senior vice-president of Corporate Relations and Community Engagement with Alberta Blue Cross. "As an organization committed to the wellbeing of all Albertans, Alberta Blue Cross is partnering with the Alberta Women's Health Foundation to raise awareness of the challenges in women's health care."

According to the Alberta Women's Health Foundation, only 7 per cent of federal health research funding in Canada is allocated to women's health research. Because of this, women experience up to a staggering 75 per cent of adverse drug reactions. As well, only 9 per cent of medications have been tested for safety in pregnant women. Additionally, women are also twice as likely as men to experience depression and are more prone to dying of heart disease than men. Finally, only 23 per cent of academic researchers are women. These are disheartening numbers that the Alberta Women's Health Foundation is trying to change for the better.

The Inspire Inclusion campaign encourages individuals to consider how far women have come in many critical areas of our lives, from sport to politics and everything in between, and highlights the brilliant efforts of the best women's health researchers in our province working to create equitable health care for all. Motivated by the work researchers are doing around the world to advance women's health, the Alberta Women's Health Foundation calls on participants to #InspireInclusion in their mission to drive gender parity. Videos promoting the campaign and profiling inspiring researchers in women's health funded by the foundation can be found [here](#).

"International Women's Day and its theme, Inspire Inclusion, is an opportunity to remind everyone that a knowledge gap exists because women were historically excluded from medical research," says Sharlene Rutherford, president and CEO of the Alberta Women's Health Foundation. "The challenges of misinformation, misdiagnosis and dismissive treatment is the result of that exclusion. Our work with partners like Alberta Blue Cross serves to raise awareness and provide critical funding for women's health research across our province, which ultimately serves the health outcomes of our province's 2.2 million women and girls. We're so pleased to launch a campaign that shines such a brilliant spotlight on the incredible research taking place right here."

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About [Alberta Blue Cross](#)

As the largest provider of health benefits in Alberta, 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.

About the [Alberta Women's Health Foundation](#)

The Alberta Women's Health Foundation (AWHF) aims to foster equity in women's health, close gaps that exist in research today and connect pathways from lab to life; all of which advance clinical care at the Lois Hole Hospital for Women and other women's health centres across Alberta and beyond. An initiative of the Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation, the AWHF supports over 160 researchers at the Women and Children's Health Research Institute (WCHRI), whose research projects focus specifically on women's health.

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