

# Solving Health Care Challenges Together

a **co-operative** approach  
to building **healthier** communities

January 2020

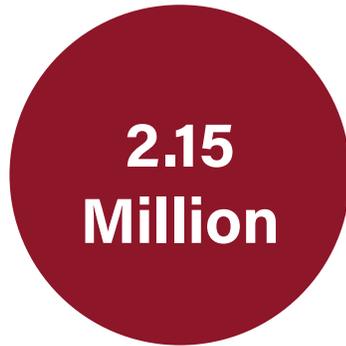


ALBERTA COMMUNITY & CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

[www.acca.coop](http://www.acca.coop) \* [info@acca.coop](mailto:info@acca.coop)

## ACCA's Member Co-ops

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Member owners in Alberta



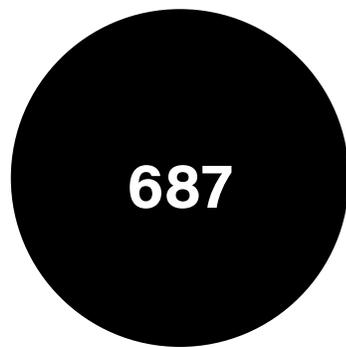
Refunded to Members since  
2017



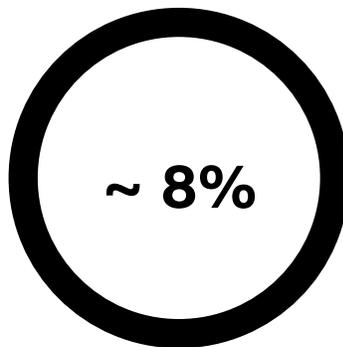
Active in Agriculture,  
Financial, Housing, Insurance,  
Petroleum, Retail, and Rural  
Utility Industries

## Alberta's Co-op Sector

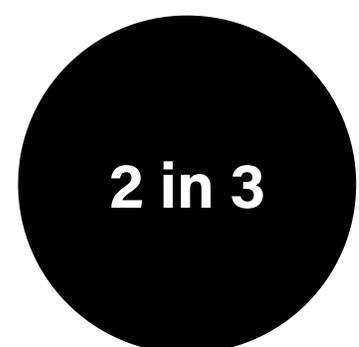
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Incorporated co-operatives  
and credit unions



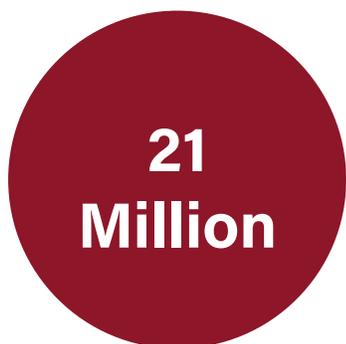
of all co-operatives in Canada  
are found in Alberta



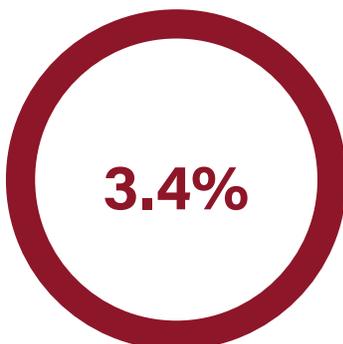
Albertans are a member of a  
co-operative or credit union

## Canada's Co-op Sector

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Member-owners



GDP contribution



jobs in every industry

## Co-ops play an important role in Alberta's communities

Whether banking at credit unions, supplying farmers, feeding families, or powering homes, the co-operative model is by no means an experiment: it is a proven success especially in rural Alberta.

As co-operatives, we don't have customers or offshore shareholders - we have members.

They are owners and investors who believe that business profits - and the jobs they create - should stay right here in Alberta.

Co-ops are built by people and communities who cannot afford to wait on outside help. They understand that the power of local ownership and democratic decision-making is a fairer way of doing business.

As people-driven enterprises, we are in tune with the "let's get this done" attitude that defines Albertans.

Co-operatives are woven into the Alberta past and present landscape, but there is much more we can do to ensure that co-operatives are a core part of the vibrant future of Alberta.

### Co-operative Social Responsibility

Co-ops are actively engaged in the communities where they do business.

"Co-operative Social Responsibility" is about doing what is right and not just about checking off a box on a corporate to-do list.

**If our community fails, we fail.**

## Co-ops are guided by seven global principles

Co-ops around the world are organized according to the seven international principles of co-operation.

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Members Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Co-operation Among Co-operatives
7. Concern for Community

**THE SEVEN CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLES**  
**ONE VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP**  
**TWO DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL**  
**THREE MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION**

**FOUR AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE**  
**AND INFORMATION**  
**SIX CO-OPERATION AMONG CO-OPERATIVES**  
**SEVEN CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY**

## Solving Health Care Challenges Together

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# Solving Challenges Together in Health and Senior Care

Accessing quality health care is an ongoing priority for Albertans. Concerns about access to primary, preventative and home care services will only increase as our population ages.

The strain on government budgets to meet these growing needs, accelerated by the option of effective but expensive new technologies, promises to deepen. New forms of service delivery are required to meet these demands, and co-operative health care organizations in Canada and worldwide are responding.

In Canada, co-operatives offering health services take different forms ranging from community health centers, medical clinics, ambulance services, and home care co-operatives.

### Role of the health and senior care co-ops

As businesses owned by their members, health and senior care co-ops fill the gaps in the public health system. Working in conjunction with their provincial health authorities, co-op services focus on the health and well-being of their members, and most use the social determinants of health to guide improvements in the health of individuals.

In Canada, health and social services co-ops provide Canadians with access to a multitude of care options (e.g. primary care clinics, comprehensive care clinics, ambulance services, home care, palliative care, training and information, health promotion, group purchasing medical supplies, mental health facilities, orientation for newcomers health insurance), thus meeting most of the criteria established by the World Health Organization for defining a comprehensive health care benefit.

While owned and controlled by their users, all health care co-ops align with the *Canada Health Act* and provide services to any Canadian, regardless of whether they are members of the co-operative.

### Benefits Overview

Health care co-operatives can provide responsive, cost-effective and quality services to seniors in both health care and housing. ACCA sees an opportunity to utilize the co-operative model within Alberta Health's Clinical Alternative Relationship Plans (ARP).

Unlike private health care systems, co-operative health care services are owned and managed by their patients on a non-profit basis and have proven they can work fully within the *Canada Health Act*. There are already over 500 health and social service co-operatives in Canada and they are proving to be a successful model that we can use right here in Alberta by exploring the opportunities through ARP.

**Services offered by co-operatives improve overall health and well-being, help reduce the workload in the public sector, and reduce the need for family physicians.**

According to the last federal census, about 25% are health care co-operatives, 15% are senior care co-operatives, and 12% of ambulatory care co-operatives. Co-operatives in this sector employ more than 10,000 people and serve around 161,000-members. Co-operative clinics also report significantly higher usage of nurse practitioners in delivering primary care and greater reliance on salaried, rather than fee-for-service compensated, physicians.

Services offered by co-operatives improve overall health and well-being, help reduce the workload in the public sector, and reduce the need for family physicians. In Quebec alone, health care co-operatives provide 2.6 million of hours of home care each year and provide primary medical care to 178,000 people in the province.

In terms of outpatient services, Canadian co-operatives outside Quebec provide care directly or indirectly through community health clinics, ambulance services and home care.

Co-operative health and senior care offer quality solutions that are often more personalized and transparent than what is found in the public system or among private providers.

Health care co-operatives take the form of worker co-operatives, consumer co-operatives, multi-stakeholder co-operatives, consumers/workers/ community organizations areas, purchase co-operatives or shared services.

## Alignment with Alberta Health Priorities

We believe that co-operatives could be used to deliver one or more of the following benefits to Albertans:

- Improve access to a range of health care services in underserved communities
- Improved health care practitioner recruitment and retention
- Reduce patient wait times
- Improved home care services for individuals and better working conditions for home care providers
- Develop new self-management models for the delivery of health care services to Indigenous peoples and deepen linkages between the delivery of child welfare and health care services for children

## Proposed Partnership

The ACCA would like to work in partnership with Alberta Health to leverage the co-operative model in providing better health outcomes for Albertans. We propose a three-phase research project:

**Phase 1 - Mapping Opportunities for Co-operative Innovation:** This phase includes:

- Identifying and filling significant gaps in

current health care provision in underserved communities.

- Conducting educational workshops with AHS staff on the potential of the co-operative health model including support and mentorship from leaders from health co-operatives in other jurisdictions.
- Framing potential co-operative solutions to these gaps via best practices in co-operative health care provision across Canada and internationally.
- Identifying communities with the potential to host community pilots based on criteria of need and leadership capacity.

**Phase 2 - Engage Communities:** This phase includes holding community information sessions on the health co-operative model in five to six potential pilot communities, including a minimum of two Indigenous communities.

We would also hold meetings with community leaders and allied health/social service organizations to explore the feasibility of co-operative solutions to priority community health needs.

The result would be to identify three communities (one Indigenous, one rural, and one urban/peri-urban) as potential hosts for the health care co-op pilot.

**Explore results** - Compile results of the previous two phases and provide education to key ministry staff on evidence-based advantages of the co-operative model, including recommendations for implementation of the pilot health care co-ops in the proposed communities.

**Co-operatives ... offer quality solutions that are often more personalized and transparent than what is found in the public system or among private providers.**

## Examples of Health and Senior Care Co-operatives

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### Saskatoon Community Clinic [saskatooncommunityclinic.ca](http://saskatooncommunityclinic.ca)

The Saskatoon Community Clinic (Saskatchewan) is a provider of primary health care services. The ultimate goal is to build a healthy population by providing support focused on healthy lifestyles, disease prevention, patient education, diagnosis and treatment.

Although owned and operated by its members, its services are open to all.

### The Medical Clinic Les Grès [cliniquemedicalelesgres.ca](http://cliniquemedicalelesgres.ca)

Saint-Étienne-des-Grès were the first health services co-operative in Quebec to open in 1995.

Currently, 12 doctors and a team of nurse clinicians, a specialized nurse, a social worker and a physiotherapist provide services throughout the surrounding rural communities. The clinic also houses a pharmacy, a dentist, an optometrist, psychologists and a physiotherapist.

### Community First Health Co-op [healthco-op.ca](http://healthco-op.ca)

Founded in 2003 in response to the loss of services at the local level, Community First Health Co-op (CFHC) is a co-operative of consumers and care providers to improve the health and well-being of communities, families and individuals by providing health care and dental care in the Nelson, B.C., area.

### Health Care Co-operatives Federation of Canada [healthcoopcanada.com](http://healthcoopcanada.com)

The Health Care Co-operatives Federation of Canada (British Columbia) brings together co-operatives across Canada that focus on wellness, social services and health.

Offering networking and training opportunities on specialized and larger topics, this national federation shares the work of its member co-operatives and represents the entire sector.

### The EESAD Cooperation [aidechezsoi.com](http://aidechezsoi.com)

The Co-operation Network of Social Economic Enterprises for Home Help (EESAD) is present in the seventeen administrative regions of the province of Quebec.

Via its network of co-operative and non-profit home care organizations, they provide more than seven million hours of service to 100,000 people, including nearly one million hours of business support services.

EESAD employs more than 9,400 people, including 8,700 home service providers with the necessary skills and expertise, to provide quality home support and services to citizens in need.

### Our Unique Distributed Ownership Model

Co-ops enable member-owners to impact business outcomes and influence decisions with a model built on a democratic one member, one vote system. This creates access to products, services or markets not otherwise available.

