

**A Memo from  
Frederica M. Williams  
President and CEO  
January 26, 2016**

Whittier Health Street Health Center continues to be recognized as a leader in the community health center field and has become a national model. This past month *the Bay State Banner* featured Whittier Street Health Center’s cutting-edge disease management, wellness and prevention programs in their article “Roxbury Health Centers Help Make History.”(See, <http://baystatebanner.com/news/2016/jan/14/roxbury-health-centers-help-make-history/#.Vpf0GdjfHWM.twitter>).

A number of other articles featured Whittier’s Diabetes Self-Management program. These wellness initiatives were awarded a large grant from the Boston Public Health Commission, \$100,000 to expand our food access and healthy eating programs. (See, <http://www.news-medical.net/news/20160112/Coordinated-care-approach-to-diabetes-self-management-benefits-underserved-adult-populations.aspx>; and <http://www.boston.com/news/2016/01/06/this-grant-aims-improve-healthy-eating-for-public-housing-residents/CyxaEzoSZytyqFtgVCMA5N/story.html> ). This additional award will allow us to continue working with the residents in the 5 public housing projects in Roxbury and others to bring fresh, local food and wellness programming to a community that is 3.5 times more likely to suffer from obesity.

A lack of access to fresh, healthy foods can contribute to poor diets and higher levels of obesity and other diet-related diseases. According to the White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity, one in three children between the ages of 2 and 19 is overweight or obese. Overweight children may experience higher rates of heart disease, diabetes and other chronic conditions as adults and must bear the costs of treating them.

Food access is about more than just whether there are grocery stores in a community. It also has to do with whether households can afford to purchase food—and affordability is closely related to rates of employment and job quality. We are looking forward to expanding our community garden to include a permanent rooftop garden. Increasing food access can help address the problems of unemployment and lack of access to healthy food simultaneously.



*Pictured above are local residents learning about fresh, local food from our community gardens*

## CEO Memo- January

Whittier is expanding its programming to address health disparities to include a Center of Excellence in LGBTQ health and wellness. Many racial and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities, and other commonly underserved populations face unique health challenges, have reduced access to health care and insurance, and often pay the price with poorer health throughout their lives. Existing research suggests LGBT people and families may face significant challenges associated with health disparities in insurance coverage and access to healthcare services, including preventive care such as cancer screenings. The limited data available suggests that:

- Gay and bisexual men comprise more than half of new HIV infections in the U.S. each year, and HIV prevalence among transgender women exceeds 25 percent nationwide.
- Lesbian and bisexual women get less routine care than other women, including breast and cervical cancer screening.
- Approximately 30 percent of LGBT youth report having been physically abused by family members because of their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

All Whittier staff and providers are now being trained on the role of healthcare and social services support for our LGBTQ population in an effort to better meet the needs of this community. We are now prescribing gender affirming hormone therapy and, are one of the only health centers in the country to offer PrEP, a drug that can drastically reduce the transmission of HIV among the LGBTQ and the community at large, as well.

We have had some exciting events this past month. In December, we hosted our annual Clean Teeth for Toys Event, providing toys and dental services to over 200 children. We also hosted our annual Geriatric Holiday event, where we welcomed nearly 400 patients, all of whom received a gift certificate, presents and a special lunch. As shown in the pictures below, a good time was had by all!



### *Upcoming Events*

Whittier's Annual Meeting & Black History Month Celebration  
Whittier Street Health Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Community Room  
Thursday, February 18, 2016  
12:00pm – 2:00pm

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Annual Roast Fundraiser

Roast of Regina M. Pisa, Chairman Emeritus, Goodwin Procter LLP.

Tuesday, April 5, 2016

6:00 PM – 9:00 PM, Fairmont Copley Hotel

Thank you for continued support for Whittier Street Health Center's mission. Please visit our website ([www.wshc.org](http://www.wshc.org)) and our Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube pages for more information regarding our impact in the community and upcoming events.

Wishing you good health!



WHITTIER STREET HEALTH CENTER

Comprehensive. Compassionate. Community.