



## WHITTIER STREET HEALTH CENTER

Comprehensive. Compassionate. Community.

# Whittier Street Health Center update from the CEO



January 22nd, 2019

Dear Friends:

In celebration of our 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we are happy to share [Whittier's annual report for FY 2018](#). It was a year of triumphs and challenges, as well as unwavering commitment to delivering innovative, high-quality care to the proud communities of Roxbury, North Dorchester, Mattapan and Jamaica Plain.

**At Whittier, we treat the whole person while considering the practical, day-to-day realities of our patients' lives.** Think about this: It's hard to shop for fruits and vegetables if you work two shifts per day. It's hard to send your kids outside to play if their environment is unsafe. It's hard to remember to take insulin if you have PTSD from chronic exposure to violence.

About 91 percent of our patients live in poverty, and the life expectancy in our service area is *three decades* less than that in the Back Bay. The health disparities we face have complex causes and require a broad approach based on whole-person health.

Central to our success is the teamwork of Whittier's health care providers and other professionals. By integrating medical, behavioral and non-clinical services, we are addressing the social determinants of health, such as economic stability and education.

**With your support, we accomplished great things in FY 2018 (see the attached [FY 2018 annual report](#)).** First, we expanded our footprint for impact in several ways. We opened a satellite clinic on Blue Hill Avenue, and we launched an onsite food pantry for our patients, half of whom have food insecurity. We deployed a mobile health van for outreach to residents in the nearby area of Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard (many of whom are fighting opioid addiction), and we hosted our 18th Annual Men's Health Summit.

**In addition, Whittier earned impressive numbers on quality measures:**

- We scored a perfect 100 on a rigorous compliance audit by the Health Resource Services Administration, the federal agency responsible for health center funding. Whittier actively monitors and evaluates organization-wide compliance with state and federal guidelines, as well as those with more stringent requirements.
- In our patient satisfaction survey, 96% patients reported being happy with the center.
- A national survey ranked Whittier #1 in the U.S. for behavioral health services.

**Meanwhile, we adapted through difficult times, which sometimes meant tough decisions.** The health care industry continues to evolve toward higher quality and lower costs, while community health centers across the U.S. are grappling with reductions in public and private grants (related to Affordable Care Act funding). All of this puts programs and jobs in jeopardy. Furthermore, at Whittier 40% of pediatric patients and

35% of adults are uninsured, yet we proudly provide care to everyone regardless of ability to pay.

Navigating these conditions, we continued our move toward value-based care (begun in 2016) by strengthening the family medicine and holistic care model and transitioning the behavioral health team into an integrated team focused on behavioral wellness and addressing the social determinants of health. We also worked hard with our health care providers to improve productivity.

We also worked hard with our health care providers to improve productivity.

Unfortunately, we also experienced grant reductions that required a staff reduction to balance our \$30 million budget. (Fifty percent of our revenues come from grants, contracts and donations.) This decision was difficult and not made lightly. However, it was essential for ensuring Whittier's strength, sustainability and ability to deliver high-quality care.

**The individuals and families served by Whittier appreciate your support every day.**

Six of them—Eli, Carol, Lionel, Wanda, Kenneth and Porfirio—were eager to share their stories for the attached FY 2018 annual report. We thank you for helping Whittier bring whole-person health care to them and thousands of others.

With gratitude,

Frederica M. Williams  
President & CEO

**Comprehensive. Compassionate. Community.**

<http://www.wshc.org/>

Whittier Street Health Center  
FREDERICA M. WILLIAMS BUILDING  
1290 Tremont Street  
Roxbury, MA 02120

**FOLLOW US**

