

## CEO Memo – April

Whittier Street Health Center continues to bustle with activity as winter gives way to spring. In the spirit of “spring forward,” we are forging ahead with our exciting upcoming events and community health initiatives. With the first quarter of the year over, we are more committed than ever to implementing innovative solutions to the health and social disparities that impact the diverse populations we serve.

### *Special Event:*

#### **2015 All Star Roast Reunion**

**Thursday, April 9, 2015, 6:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m.**

#### **Boston Park Plaza Hotel**

Please join us for Whittier’s 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Roast! This popular Boston event honors our local leaders, raises funds to support Whittier’s mission, and spreads laughter. This year’s theme, “Whittier’s All Star Reunion: Celebrating our Champions of Health Care and Health Equity,” brings together the health care and corporate leaders who have supported our vision, mission, and growth since 2003, including:

- Bill Van Faasen, former Chairman, President, and CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBSMA);
- Dr. Edward J. Benz, Jr., President and CEO of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute;
- Andrew Dreyfus, President and CEO of BCBSMA;
- Robert L. Beal, President of Related Beal;
- Paul Grogan, President and CEO of The Boston Foundation;
- Robert Mahoney (formerly of Citizens Bank), President and CEO of Belmont Savings Bank;
- Paul La Camera, General Manager of WBUR;
- Tom O’Neill, President and CEO of O’Neill and Associates;
- Ted Kelly, Chairman of the Kelly Family Foundation;
- And many more luminaries from Boston’s biggest industries!

### *The Whittier Wellness and Fitness Club:*

Construction is now well under way for the Whittier Wellness and Fitness Club! This new facility will be located in the ground floor of our building, and will be open to Whittier patients, community residents, and health center employees. The fitness club will offer activities that are known to improve health and mental health, including aerobics, acupuncture, yoga, dance therapy, and life coaching. Whittier patients referred to the fitness club through our *Prescription for Health* program will receive support for a range of wellness activities designed to help prevent or manage their condition, such as hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and depression. Fitness club staff will support members’ wellness and fitness goals, help them remain engaged with services, and keep them linked to their primary care team if they are patients at Whittier.

The Whittier Wellness and Fitness Club will open in June 2015.

### *The Community Wellness Garden at Whittier:*

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Since diet and exercise go hand-in-hand for achieving and maintaining good health, we are also moving forward with the Community Wellness Garden to complement the Whittier Wellness and Fitness Club. The community garden will be established on the north side of our building, and its activities and products will be incorporated into nutrition-related programs offered at the health center. For example, participants of Race Around Roxbury, our free afterschool program, can tend to the Kids Garden, an area designed to teach children how to grow, prepare, preserve, and consume fresh produce. Our future Community Gardeners will also help create a Healthy Eating Cookbook inspired by what they themselves planted and harvested. We are very excited to have the community garden to further enhance our health education initiatives and partnerships.

### ***Grant Award:***

Whittier has been selected as one of three health centers to participate in Promotores(as) Make Cents, a federally-funded project that aims to develop an ROI calculation of community health worker (CHW) programs. Led by MHP Salud, a nonprofit that works toward a healthy future for underserved Latino communities, the project is evaluating Whittier's popular Building Vibrant Communities program for public housing residents, to compare the costs of implementing the program with the projected savings stemming from participants' improved outcomes. The goal is to demonstrate the value of our Social Health Coordinators, who are public housing residents recruited and trained by Whittier to be CHWs.

### ***Community Event:***

#### **Small Business Accelerator Forum**

**Tuesday, May 5, 2015, 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.**

**Whittier Street Health Center, Community Education Room (2nd floor)**

Whittier is hosting the Small Business Accelerator Forum together with Tufts Health Plan, Eastern Bank, and the Greater New England Minority Supplier Development Council (GNEMSDC). The event will bring together small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses and the focus will be on health insurance, the Affordable Care Act, and access to capital. I will open the event, and Marc Spooner, Senior Vice President of Health Care Services at Tufts Health Plan, will conclude the evening.

Thank you for supporting Whittier Street Health Center as we champion health equity for Boston's underserved. Please visit our website ([www.wshc.org](http://www.wshc.org)) and our Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, and YouTube pages for more about our services and community-based initiatives.