

A very Happy New Year to you from Whittier Street Health Center!

I hope you are as excited as I am about the opportunities we have this year to work together to further improve the health and wellness of our community.

We are delighted to open the year with success: Whittier passed its on-site Joint Commission survey, which evaluated the health center's continuous improvements in support of safe, high quality care, treatment, and services. Accreditation and certification by The Joint Commission is recognized nationwide as a symbol of quality that reflects an organization's commitment to meeting certain performance standards.

The survey took place on January 14-16, 2014. Surveyors walked through the health center to assess Whittier's Ambulatory Care departments (meaning health services that do not require overnight hospitalization) and Laboratory Services. This year, we also had a review of our Behavioral Services Department.

Whittier staff impressed the surveyors with their positive spirit and commitment to our mission of ensuring equitable access to high quality health care. One of the surveyors commented, "The organization is magnificent!" All the evaluators agreed that Whittier operates at a very high level compared to other health centers of the same size.



Whittier Street Health Center President and CEO Frederica M. Williams (center) at the Pinnacle Awards with Penni McLean-Conner (right), Chief Customer Officer & Senior Vice President, Customer Group, Northeast Utilities, and the Northeast Utility Women team.

On January 30, The Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce celebrated the 20th year of its Annual Pinnacle Awards for business and professional women who have demonstrated excellence in entrepreneurship, management, and lifetime achievement. It is one of the premiere gatherings of women and men in the region and typically attracts more than 1,000 attendees. In 2011, I was honored to receive the Award for Achievement in Non-Profit Management. I found

it especially rewarding to celebrate the 20th anniversary of this event that recognizes the amazing women in our communities.

Our Cardiovascular Community Health Ambassador (CCHA) Program has now reached over 2,000 participants! The program identifies new cases of hypertension while linking community residents to high quality care. Program staff hire and train patients who have demonstrated compliance with their health management goals to become Health Ambassadors and provide peer support and education in community settings.

Since 2011, CCHA has offered bilingual educational materials and six-week group education sessions about healthy eating, managing stress, and increasing physical activity. “Before I did not know what the food was doing to my body,” said one participant. “I really liked learning about what the food does to you. How it affects your day, how it settles in your body when you eat.” He has also learned to manage his blood pressure. “My blood pressure has been good. I am checking every morning. My blood pressure used to be very high all of the time, now it has been good.”

The Affordable Care Act’s provision for low-income people took effect in January. Whittier anticipates serving individuals and families newly eligible for health insurance, or those with expanded benefits such as oral health and/or mental health coverage. Our front-line providers and community outreach staff continue to target hard-to-reach populations so they can be connected to the health care system. We are also maintaining our many community outreach activities and health education presentations about the benefits of wellness, prevention, and building a healthy lifestyle at any age.

We hope you can join us for two exciting events coming up very soon. To celebrate American Heart Month, we will hold our **Heart Healthy Month Celebration on February 11, from 11 AM to 2 PM**. Together with the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation, we will focus on our community’s journey toward heart health through cooking demonstrations, Meet-and-Greet sessions with health care providers, remarks from cardiovascular program participants, light refreshments, and other heart-centered activities.

Next, Whittier will hold its **2014 Black History Month Celebration on Thursday, February 13, 2014, from 12 PM to 2 PM**. It will be held together with the 2013 Annual Meeting. The event will include the annual address on the state of Whittier, an art exhibition by our resident artist and patient, Paul Andrews, as well as musical performances, storytelling, and poetry readings. Former Boston mayoral candidate Charlotte Golar Richie will receive the 2014 Black History Leadership Award for her exemplary contributions to our communities, and State Treasurer & Receiver General Steven Grossman will serve as this year’s Annual Meeting keynote speaker and receive the 2013 Whittier Street Health Center President’s Award.

It is a pleasure to keep you updated about our work here at Whittier. I look forward to sharing more great news about community health this year! Please visit our website, [www.wshc.org](http://www.wshc.org), as well as our Facebook and Twitter pages, for more details about our programs and services. Thank you again for supporting Whittier Street Health Center.