



WHITTIER STREET HEALTH CENTER

Comprehensive. Compassionate. Community.

Whittier Street Health Center update from the CEO



November 12th, 2019

Dear Friends:

As we head into the holiday season and the close of 2019, there are many things to be thankful for here at Whittier. For 86 years, Whittier has been dedicated to serving and bringing access to healthcare and social services to the diverse populations of Roxbury, North Dorchester, Mattapan, Jamaica Plain, and surrounding neighborhoods. We are proud to share the following new developments which have helped and encouraged us to continue our vision for a healthier community!

For the sixth consecutive year Whittier was named by the Boston Globe Magazine and Commonwealth Institute a Top 100 Women-Led Business in Massachusetts.

We were honored to join with fellow women-led businesses from across the state as we received this distinction for our sixth year. Whittier strives to be a place where everyone is welcome and allowed to be their best – as a patient or as one of our dedicated staff. This award is humbling, but also very encouraging to know that Whittier is part of such an outstanding family of women and businesses across our state!

This past year we have stepped up and expanded the use of our Mobile Health Van. The van is a vital part of our commitment to meet residents of our community – where they are at. To date the van has focused on community outreach to test for HIV, Hep C, and other infectious diseases. The van provides on-site HIV testing, as well as HIV prevention counseling, health literature, and thousands of condoms. The van's outreach program also provides a lifeline for those recently released from prison, suffering from immediate health issues, or have lost touch with treatment.

We are now working to expand the range of health services offered by the van to include retinopathy, health screenings, eye exams, dental cleanings, and substance abuse screenings. To support these initiatives we are building a new team to provide consistent outreach, health education and screenings six days a week across our service area.

Whittier is the Greater Boston home for the Moms Do Care Program, With funding from DPH for our MOMs program, the Behavioral Health team has partnered with the Women's Health team to provide support to our mothers with substance use disorders. The program is focused on women (18 years and over) who are either pregnant, postpartum and/or parenting a young child. Moms Do Care targets whole-person wellbeing including mental health care, social services, Safety and Nurturing Support groups, and medication assisted treatment (such as methadone) if needed. Among the many benefits provided by Moms Do Care is child care, transportation to services, and after hours support. By affiliating with Whittier Street Health Center the program is also able to connect participants to pediatric and other health care services, in addition to social services to assist with housing, employment, and life skills.

If you know someone who could benefit from the MOMs program at Whittier - drop by on Monday's at 1pm at the health center's main Roxbury location at 1290 Tremont Street, or

call 617-989-3122 to speak with a Care Coordinator.

Whittier's community garden is growing! Thanks to funding from the City of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development we have expanded our Community Garden program. The new garden outside our 1290 Tremont St location features 14 irrigated gardening beds which will be available to the community and Whittier patients to grow and harvest healthy, fresh vegetables. The expanded garden also features several benches to relax on and look at our new and expanded family of cows and sheep. Make sure to join us Spring 2020 as we celebrate a naming ceremony for our public art (cows and sheep) and the launch of the expanded gardening program.

To battle the epidemic of obesity so many in our community struggle with, Whittier is in the process of finalizing the recruitment of a world class clinical team to manage **our new Weight Management and Related Diseases** clinic which will be located on the first floor at 1290 Tremont. The clinic will offer accessible, life changing access to programs, care coordination, and service to assist those who are battling to lose weight and keep it off in a healthy way.

In August we opened the doors to our expanded Food Pantry stocked with staples and canned goods to provide healthy options to patients and their families who do not have enough food. We have recently converted the Call Center on the basement level to an expanded Food Pantry so we can serve more people. Approximately 50% of our patients report being food insecure, and access to free healthy foods will support our efforts to address the high rates of chronic diseases in our patient population.

As always we are proud to host the following events:

On Wednesday December 4th we will be hosting our **annual Women for Whittier Holiday Tea**. Each year the event recognizes women who have made an impact on their communities through service and leadership.

The following day, Thursday December 5th, **Whittier will observe World Aids Day** with an event featuring education, guest speakers, entertainment and food. The free event is open to the public and all are invited to recognize how we are eliminating HIV epidemics community by community. Whittier's World Aids Day will take place from 11-2:30 in the community room.

Make sure to put **April 9th on your calendars for our Annual Roast** at the Copley Park Plaza in Boston. We will be honoring Dr. Mark Girard, President, Northeast Division & Executive VP of Steward Health Care Systems. Please contact our Development Office for sponsorship information and join us in this fun and important evening.

From all of us here at Whittier – we wish you and your family a fantastic holiday season and we look forward to sharing a great 2020 with you!

Thank you to all who have supported our efforts to serve as Champions For Health Equity!

Warm regards,

Frederica M. Williams
President & CEO

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

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