

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

September 2013

Labor Day is behind us and a new academic year has started for students in our communities. Here at Whittier Street Health Center, we celebrated the start of the school year with a Back-to-School BBQ, partly funded by Cradles to Crayons and GE. Almost 800 people came to enjoy the food on the grill, popcorn, and the shaved ice treats, and children flocked to the bouncy castles and inflatable playgrounds. After the rousing talent show by local residents, students received backpacks and gym bags for school.

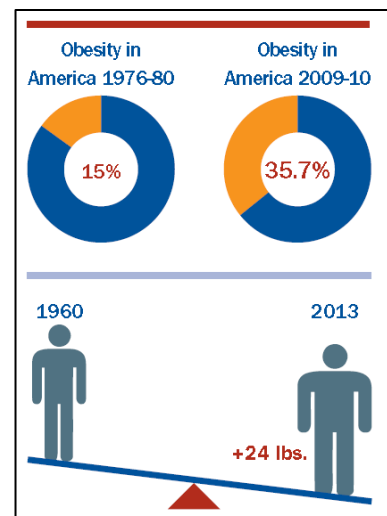


I am pleased to report that, in July, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) selected Whittier as the sole recipient of a grant to assist in transitioning the estimated 8,000 patients formerly served by the now-closed Roxbury Comprehensive Community Center (RoxComp). Since then, we have been working to ensure that the residents and families in the Roxbury-North Dorchester service area receive the primary care and health services they need. With the grant and the expanded capacity of our new state-of-the-art medical home, we are on track to reach even more people in Boston’s urban neighborhoods through our Boston Health Equity Project, which promotes wellness and seeks to eliminate health and social disparities.

We are also welcoming thousands of new patients from the Martha Eliot Health Center at Boston Children’s Hospital, after the hospital’s decision to focus solely on children and adolescents. We have been coordinating closely with Boston Children’s Hospital to transition adults formerly served by Martha Eliot to Whittier. We are committed to providing former Martha Eliot patients with the best care on-site, and with the community health and outreach programs that are key components of our comprehensive health care delivery model.

We launched our new website (www.wshc.org) to help us engage new and existing patients. The redesign makes it easier to find information about specific programs and services, schedule appointments, and learn more about Whittier’s staff and the work we do. We are also preparing to activate our new Patient Portal, a patient-centered, secure site that allows the people we serve to review their own medical records, schedule visits, pay bills, and request prescription refills or referrals.

This month, our health focus is on cholesterol, obesity, and healthy aging. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation recently released its latest “F as in Fat” report, with the encouraging statement that adult obesity rates have remained level in almost every state. However, every state still has adult obesity rates of over 20%, and obesity affects 17% of all children in the US (Centers for Disease Control). At Whittier, 27% of our Pediatrics patients have a Body Mass Index (BMI) over the 85th percentile.



The situation looks grim for obese seniors, who are at greater risk than their younger counterparts for chronic diseases and mortality. Seniors need to participate in physical activities to reduce the chances of falls and of developing coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer, or diabetes; and to increase physical strength and stamina. Physical activity can also reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, and helps to maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints.



Whittier has many exercise and nutrition education programs in the community to help our patients live healthy lives, such as the Building Vibrant Communities program funded by the Kresge Foundation. For children, we provide the Race Around Roxbury afterschool program as part of our Pediatrics Healthy Weight Clinic. Our programming is designed to help families make healthy, informed choices in spite of living in a food desert, or a place with limited access to fresh, affordable foods. Whittier offers social services free of charge as part of our commitment to addressing the social determinants of health. Assisting us in our mission is the Fresh Truck, a mobile healthy food market that provides fresh fruits and vegetables to Boston's urban communities, which is at Whittier every Tuesdays and Fridays, from 11 AM to 2 PM.

We hope you join us for two upcoming events: the Hispanic Month Celebration in October, and the International Gospel Concert in November. Whittier's ***2013 Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration is on Wednesday, October 2, 2013, starting at 5 PM***, and will be hosted by Emmy-winning TV host, reporter, and producer Tim Estiloz. The evening will celebrate Hispanic and Latino Americans' continued influence in the surrounding communities of Boston. After that, Whittier is pleased to hold the ***2013 Saving the Health of Our Community International Gospel Concert on Saturday, November 23, 2013, at the Berklee Performance Center***. Bobby Jones, host and executive producer of BET's Bobby Jones Gospel and producer of Video Gospel, will once again serve as our esteemed Special Guest Master of Ceremonies. We look forward to seeing you there!

It is a pleasure keeping you updated about the work we do at Whittier. Please visit our new website, 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.

Sincerely,

Frederica M. Williams
President and CEO