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Whittier Street Health Center Gets \$750K Kresge Foundation Grant



February 24, 2011 — Whittier Street Health Center, a Roxbury-based nonprofit that provides comprehensive health services including primary care, has received a \$750,000 grant from the Kresge Foundation to reduce environmental and social stressors among public

housing residents.

Whittier Street Health Center, which has been serving its community for more than 75 years, previously received a \$75,000 Kresge grant for program planning and design in advance of the larger grant.

In announcing the grant, the Foundation noted, "Whittier Street Health Center Committee Inc.'s Building Vibrant Communities in Boston Public Housing represents a concerted effort among the public health department, housing organizations, higher-education institutions and community-action groups to support efforts to minimize environmental and social stressors that contribute to high rates of hypertension and depression among residents living in public housing."

The new funding will support development of proposed new health-care delivery models designed to improve public-health care. Over the next three years, the Whittier Street project will be evaluated for its effectiveness in reducing health disparities.

"It is hoped that these innovative approaches will positively impact the future direction of how community health centers improve the health of underserved populations," says David D. Fukuzawa, Kresge's Health Program director.

Kresge's Safety-net Enhancement Initiative, launched in 2009, is intended to reduce disparities and improve the health outcomes of low-income individuals. By funding both a program planning and design phase and a demonstration phase, Kresge provides community-health centers and anchor institutions from diverse geographies and sectors with the resources to collaborate on the creation of innovative approaches to reducing health disparities by addressing upstream factors, such as access to healthy food, cultural isolation and violence.

In February 2010, the foundation awarded a total of \$900,000 in part-one grants to 12 public-health agencies and community nonprofit organizations in 11 states. The eight award recipients of part-two grants were selected on a competitive basis from among the grantees in the original cohort.

New Building Under Way

Whittier Street broke ground last fall for a new, state-of-the-art 79,000-square-foot health center, which will more than double its size from 33,000 square feet.

In addition, the new structure will enable the organization to:

- Create a community resource room that will include access to

health education resources, computer kiosks, and health professionals.

- Expand an urgent care walk in clinic.
- Establish a community cancer clinic that will include fixed mammography and cancer specialists.
- Improve handicap access.

The nonprofit said the \$35 million project will create 50 new full time positions, 33 of which will be entry level positions for low-income residents of the community.

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