

CEO Memo – June

Summer is almost here, and the wonderful weather is the perfect accompaniment to the many things we have to celebrate at Whittier Street Health Center:

Thought Leadership:

On May 8, I spoke in Washington, D.C. at the *Rev 2014 Forum: Navigating Cancer Care in the Era of Personalized Medicine*, which brought together prominent leaders in the cancer community who are unified in their mission of improving the lives of people affected by cancer. My presentation was about Patient Empowerment through work done by Whittier in partnership with the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (DCFI) to promote health equity for residents in our community. Our enduring relationship, which began in 2002, has led to us creating a solution to cancer disparities in Boston in the form of our Cancer Equity Model, which is improving outcomes for underserved patients across the spectrum of cancer-related disease by facilitating clinical access to the spectrum of preventive medicine, treatment, and clinical trials.

Grant Awards:

Whittier is one of 22 organizations across Massachusetts selected to receive a two-year, \$250,000 *Increasing Access to and Measuring the Benefits of Providing Behavioral Health Services in Massachusetts* grant from the Attorney General's Office. The funding will help Whittier add a Behavioral Health component within our Urgent Care Clinic to provide immediate access to high quality medical/mental health care, and to decrease unnecessary Emergency Department visits. This award is especially timely because the demand for mental health and substance abuse services is reaching a crisis point for our vulnerable populations in Boston's urban neighborhoods.

New Programs:

Starting in June, Whittier's Nutritionists (Registered Dietitians) will go out to nearby public housing developments and the wider community to provide workshops and demonstrations about nutrition-related topics such as buying fresh and affordable foods, diabetes, hypertension, and others. Meanwhile, thanks to a small grant from the Leon Lowenstein Foundation, Whittier's Healthy Weight Team is introducing *Mommy & Me*, a five-week cooking course for children under age 7 and their parents. The goal of both new initiatives is to support participants in actively building better lifestyles, stronger families, and healthier communities.

Events:

Please join us for two upcoming annual events in June:

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Resiliency: Healthy Living for Women and Girls—Women for Whittier Summer Tea & Talk (Tuesday, June 10, 4:00-5:30 PM). This year's summer tea will include a presentation by participants in our DecisionArts program for girls who have experienced violence. DecisionArts uses Arts Therapy (music, drama and arts) to build self-esteem and address behavioral and/or social issues brought on by exposure to violence. Program participants will share their personal experiences with overcoming social inequities and improving their health and wellness through the program.

Celebrating the Great Things our Boys and Men Bring to our Lives—Men's Health Summit (Saturday, June 28, 11:00-2:00 PM). We are excited to welcome back fitness expert Billy Blanks, Jr. and his wife Sharon Catherine Blanks. Our Men's Health Champions include: the Honorable Mayor Marty Walsh, Bill Brett of the Boston Globe, Dr. Marc Garnick of Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Dr. Luc Joseph of Boston Children's Hospital, Joseph Nolan of Northeastern Utilities, and Richard Taylor of Suffolk University.

Thank you very much for your continued support for Whittier Street Health Center. Please visit our website (www.wshc.org) and Facebook and Twitter pages for more details about our programs and services.