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**BOSTON HEALTH CENTER SECURES \$400,000 CDC GRANT FOR  
HIV PREVENTION PROGRAM**

***Program to provide culturally linguistic and appropriate HIV prevention services***

BOSTON – August 15, 2010 – Whittier Street Health Center (Whittier) has secured a \$400,000 grant from the Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) for a new program that will provide culturally linguistic and culturally sensitive HIV prevention services over the next five years. Whittier is the only center funded in Boston to serve this particular population, which includes hard to reach African-American and Latino men and women. The program is to be part of Whittier’s *Project ME* which helps serve community members who lack access to these services in traditional clinical settings.

A recent CDC report says “Even though Blacks (including African Americans) account for about 13% of the US population, they account for about half (49%) of the people who get HIV and AIDS.” The same report cites “Hispanics/Latinos account for 15% of the U.S. population but accounted for 17% of all new HIV infections occurring in the United States.”

Today, approximately 20% of individuals with HIV are unaware of their HIV status. Offering HIV test results in twenty minutes, *Project ME* provides a more accessible environment to an at-risk community. *Project ME* is scheduled to open its doors on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 130 Warren Street in Roxbury.

Whittier Street Health Center designed *Project Me*, recognizing the need to engage and retain people of color in HIV/ STD prevention and care services. The project utilizes Community Health Workers and a Drop-in Center as entry points of care for this population.

*Project Me* targets people of color (specifically Latinos and African Americans) in low-income areas of Boston. These communities are at higher risk for HIV infection or transmission, and they lack accessible care. *Project Me* also serves as a discreet and non-descript name to avoid stigmas associated with HIV/AIDS. This population often does not access clinical settings for a number of reasons including lack of trust in the health care system, lack of knowledge on how to navigate healthcare systems, especially for those not born in the United States.

“By serving patients six days a week in nearly 20 different languages, we aim to cover the issue of HIV prevention and awareness in such underserved areas as Roxbury, Mattapan, Dorchester, and other surrounding communities” says Frederica Williams, CEO and President of Whittier Street Health Center.

The types of interventions that will be used in the program have proven to be effective with the selected target community populations in increasing condom use, HIV knowledge and risk reduction behaviors. Additionally, Whittier recognizes the importance of community involvement; therefore members of the community, including those living with HIV, will be involved at all stages of design and delivery of the interventions.

**About Whittier Street Health Center**

Whittier Street Health Center ([www.wshc.org](http://www.wshc.org)) is a Joint Commission accredited, private, non-profit, independently licensed community health center dedicated to providing high quality, reliable and accessible primary health care and support services for diverse populations to promote wellness and eliminate health and social disparities. Serving more than 14,500 clients with approximately 60,000 clinic visits and 20,000 community outreach visits annually, Whittier has a patient base which is ethnically and racially diverse and includes significant numbers of individuals from Roxbury, Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, the South End and Greater Boston.

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