



WHITTIER STREET HEALTH CENTER

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**WHITTIER STREET HEALTH CENTER PARTNERS WITH DANA-FARBER
TO OPEN CANCER SURVIVORSHIP CLINIC**

The Roxbury clinic supports cancer survivors living in the Greater Boston community

BOSTON – October 28, 2008 – The Whittier Street Health Center, in partnership with Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, will open its cancer survivorship clinic on Tuesday, Oct. 28, to provide cancer survivors living in the Roxbury community with the care, education and support needed after completing their cancer treatment.

“Whittier is pleased to partner with Dana-Farber Cancer Institute to support cancer survivors in our community,” said Whittier President and CEO Frederica M. Williams. “The clinic is an extension of Whittier’s role to foster an environment where cancer survivors find support and to provide access to vital information. Those living in poverty, as many of our clients are, with limited means and an historical lack of health care access, face greater socioeconomic challenges in accessing culturally competent, high quality care, and often lack an adequate social safety net to help them cope with the emotional and physical burdens that may result from their cancer treatments. These are the voids this clinic will fill.”

The good news is that more people are surviving cancer today, thanks to research that has led to new and more powerful treatments. However, some of these treatments may cause physical and emotional side effects months or years after treatment has ended – long after the survivor has left the care of his or her oncologist and returned to the care of their primary care physician. These problems can include heart disease, infertility, anxiety, or future cancer risk.

“Unfortunately, cancer can affect people even after they have completed their care,” said Edward J. Benz, Jr., MD, president of Dana-Farber. “Survivors may be free of their cancer, but many may struggle with side effects of their disease or their treatment. Dana-Farber is therefore committed to working closely with community organizations like Whittier to ensure that survivorship services are as easily available as possible.”

To help cancer survivors address these needs, Dana-Farber is working hand in hand with the medical and psycho/social staff at Whittier to develop a clinic that provides cancer

survivors accessible, cutting edge, state-of-the-art survivorship care. Funded in part by a grant from the Lance Armstrong Foundation, the cancer survivorship clinic will provide medical and psycho/social assessments, development of personalized cancer survivor care plans, and counseling sessions with the primary care specialists, nutritionists, cancer case managers, a clinical social worker, and mental/behavioral health counselors. The clinic also will host peer support groups and workshops to further educate participants on strategies related to healthy living after cancer. All of these services are designed to help cancer survivors to take control of their lives after cancer.

The cancer survivorship clinic's services are open to all cancer survivors regardless of where they were treated for cancer or where they currently receive primary care and all services are covered by medical insurance.

Dana-Farber's partnership with Whittier is part of its commitment to ensure greater access to quality cancer survivorship care in the community. The need for such services and care is underscored by a national survey of primary care physicians that found that many reported having inadequate information about the cancer treatments their patients received, the resulting risks from the cancer treatments, recommended screening for late effects, and how best to address the on-going physical and emotional needs of their patients living with a history of cancer. However, presented with the right tools and information, primary care physicians can provide the cancer survivor with the highest quality, most accessible, most appropriate healthcare after cancer treatment has ended.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death, after heart disease, among Hispanics and African-Americans. Overall, slightly less than 1 in 2 Hispanic men and 1 in 3 Hispanic women will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime, accounting for 20 percent of all Hispanics in the United States.

Additionally, African-American men have a 40 percent higher death rate from all cancers combined than their counterparts; and African American women have a 37 percent higher death rate from breast cancer than white women.

At its location in Roxbury, Whittier serves the most impoverished areas of Boston. Approximately 60 percent of the health center patients live below the poverty level, 92 percent live below 200 percent of the poverty level and 82 percent live in public housing. Additionally, Whittier Street serves the city's diverse population. Forty-three percent of patients identify as Hispanic or Latino and 42 percent identify as black or African-American. Nearly half its patients, 46 percent, are best served in a language other than English and they represent 20 different countries. Whittier is a Refugee Health Assessment Site and is one of 46 health centers across the country federally funded to provide services to public housing residents.

"There is a clear need to help the growing number of people who are cancer survivors, especially those who are underserved or live in underserved communities," said Williams. "Our goal with this clinic is to enable those who have beaten the disease to live full and healthy lives."

About Whittier Street Health Center

Whittier Street Health Center (www.wshc.org) is a 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 12,000 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. Whittier provides a comprehensive array of 30 healthcare programs and services designed to meet the primary health care, behavioral health, and social needs of the community.

About Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (www.dana-farber.org) is a principal teaching affiliate of the Harvard Medical School and is among the leading cancer research and care centers in the United States. It is a founding member of the Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center (DF/HCC), designated a comprehensive cancer center by the National Cancer Institute.

About the New England Cancer Survivorship Consortium

This clinic is part of the New England Cancer Survivorship Consortium, a program launched in 2006 by the Perini Family Survivors' Center at Dana-Farber. With funding from the Lance Armstrong Foundation, the consortium aims to become the hub of cancer survivorship care, education, support, and research in this region.

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