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Roxbury Diabetes Education Program Merits ADA Recognition

ROXBURY, MA (January 7, 2009) – Whittier Street Health Center’s Diabetes Clinic has been awarded Recognition from the American Diabetes Association for the diabetes education component of the program. Funded in part by the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation, this program offers high-quality education services to the patients it serves.

The ADA Education Recognition effort, begun in the fall of 1986, is a voluntary process which assures that approved education programs have met the National Standards for Diabetes Self-Management Education Programs. Programs that achieve Recognition status have a staff of knowledgeable health professionals who can provide state-of-the-art information about diabetes management for patients.

Self-management education is an essential component of diabetes treatment. One consequence of compliance with the National Standards is the greater consistency in the quality and quantity of education offered to people with diabetes. The participant in an ADA Recognized program will be taught, as needed, self-care skills that will promote better management of his or her diabetes treatment regimen. All approved education programs cover the following topics as needed: diabetes disease process; nutritional management; physical activity; medications; monitoring; preventing, detecting and treating acute complications; preventing, detecting and treating chronic complications through risk reduction; goal setting and problem solving; psychological adjustment; and preconception care, management during pregnancy, and gestational management.

“At Whittier we serve people from 20 different countries. Approximately 43% of our patients identify as Hispanic or Latino and 42% as Black or African American,” said Whittier President and CEO, Frederica M. Williams. “In 2003 we joined the Bureau of Primary Health Care’s National Health Disparities, which was focused on improving the delivery of health care and incorporating self management as a critical component to keep patients engaged and active in their care. We began our focus on diabetes due to the prevalence in our community and developed innovative clinical interventions and educational programs and services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate,” continued Ms. Williams. “Our partnership with the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation gave us the resources required to prepare for the ADA Recognition. As an organization focused on continuous quality improvement, the recognition assures that we will continue to use the best practices our patients deserve.”

Assuring high-quality education for patient self-care is one of the primary goals of the Education Recognition program. Through the support of the health care team and increased knowledge and awareness of diabetes, the patient can assume a major part of the responsibility for his/her diabetes management. Unnecessary hospital admissions and some of the acute and chronic complications of diabetes may be prevented through self-management education.

“The process gives professionals a national standard by which to measure the quality of the services they provide”, commented Dr. Mark Drews, Whittier’s Diabetes Champion. “And, of course, it helps consumers to identify these quality programs.”

About Whittier Street Health Center

Whittier Street Health Center (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 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.

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