



## 5,000<sup>th</sup> PERSON RECEIVES FREE COVID-19 TEST FROM WHITTIER STREET HEALTH CENTER

### ***Mayor Walsh calls Whittier Street testing “instrumental in Boston’s fight against COVID-19”***

Acting as a safety net for Boston’s low-income neighborhoods vulnerable to the pandemic, the [Whittier Street Health Center](#) reached a milestone yesterday when the 5,000<sup>th</sup> person received a free COVID-19 test from the nonprofit’s testing program, which began April 13. The 5,000<sup>th</sup> person received the free COVID-19 test this morning when the Whittier Mobile Health Van visited the New Franklin Park Apartments in Dorchester.

“Our black and brown communities have been most vulnerable to COVID-19, so we’re answering the call and making sure anyone who wants a test can get a test,” said Frederica M. Williams, president and CEO of the Whittier Street Health Center (WSHC). “And we’re doing it by removing the barriers people may have to testing by going where they are. Testing is performed by our culturally sensitive and highly skilled compassionate caregivers.”

During a time when COVID-19 tests are difficult to come by, not to mention expensive, the free COVID-19 tests administered at the Whittier Street Health Center’s Tremont Street location and through its Mobile Health Van have been a popular, not to mention, critically needed service in low-income communities that have experienced high rates of infection, as evidenced by the Center’s recent grant of \$75,000 from the Boston Resiliency Fund.

“Partners like Whittier Street Health Center are instrumental in Boston’s fight against COVID-19,” said Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh. “Removing barriers to testing helps people get the care they need and avoid passing the virus on to others. Public health models tell us that the more testing we can do, the more we can reduce our positive infection rate, giving us the data and confidence we need to move forward safely.”

While the demand for COVID-19 tests is high, lack of access to transportation, social isolation and fear of the virus has meant many of the diverse communities are not being tested, which is why the Mobile Health Van has been a lifeline in providing necessary testing and contact tracing to help contain the spread of the virus.

“We’re looking at the hotspots where we know people are at risk along with the demographics - age, race and ethnicity,” said Williams, who is part of the Mayor’s Health Inequities Task Force focused on Boston’s COVID-19 response. “We’re being aggressive about it. The virus has no mercy and we’re doing everything we can to keep our most vulnerable safe. And until this virus is stricken, we will keep at it. We have no plan to stop our free COVID-19 tests. Anyone who wants one can truly get one.”

Along with the COVID-19 testing, Whittier Street Health Center has continued to provide medical services, access to food distribution in its food pantry, and emergency childcare program for essential and frontline employees.

With the support of Mayor Walsh and the Boston Resiliency Fund, we have developed and disseminated several culturally sensitive call to action PSAs to educate patients from diverse backgrounds and to remove barriers to testing and care.

Please click on the links below to view the brief videos in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole, Arabic and English:

[Whittier Street Health Center: COVID-19 Call to Action \(Spanish\)](#)

[Whittier Street Health Center: Adult Medicine PSA](#)

[Whittier Street Health Center: Obstetrics & Gynecology/Women's Health PSA](#)

[Whittier Street Health Center: Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine PSA](#)

[Whittier Street Health Center: Family Medicine PSA \(Haitian Creole\)](#)

[Whittier Street Health Center: Family Medicine PSA \(Cape Verdean Creole\)](#)

[Whittier Street Health Center: Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine PSA \(Arabic\)](#)

## **ABOUT US**

Whittier Street Health Center is an independently licensed community health care center with a mission of providing high quality, reliable and accessible primary healthcare for diverse populations while promoting wellness and eliminating health and social disparities. A champion of equitable access to high quality, patient-focused care, social justice and economic equity, Whittier is accredited by The Joint Commission (TJC), certified by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) as a Patient-Centered Medical Home, and recognized by the NCQA for its Behavioral Health Integration. Through its locations in Roxbury and North Dorchester, and its Mobile Health Van program, Whittier serves nearly 30,000 patients and 20,000 community outreach visits annually; its ethnically and racially diverse patient base is primarily made up of individuals from Roxbury, Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, the South End and Greater Boston. Approximately 36% of Whittier's patients are uninsured. Whittier provides a comprehensive array of 40 healthcare programs and services designed to meet the primary health care, behavioral health, and social needs of the community. Learn more at [www.wshc.org](http://www.wshc.org).

Warm regards,  
Frederica M. Williams

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