



WHITTIER STREET HEALTH CENTER
Comprehensive. Compassionate. Community.

Trust as our Foundation, Transformation as our Mission
Whittier's Unyielding Dedication to Health Equity and Social Justice





Vision Statement:

To become an exceptional community health provider that addresses health care inequities, closes gaps in life expectancy, and pursues social justice.

Mission Statement:

To serve as a center of excellence that provides high quality, and accessible health care and social services that achieve health equity, social justice, and the economic well-being of our diverse patient populations.

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Dear Friends,

As we look back on another successful year at Whittier Street Health Center, it is crucial to acknowledge the fundamental role that trust plays in everything we do. A principle that intertwines with our mission and vision, guiding our efforts to serve the community with compassion and commitment to health equity and social justice. Trust is not merely a byproduct of our relationships. It is a cornerstone that fosters understanding, collaboration, and health outcomes that truly reflect the needs of our community.

Trust as Our Guiding Principle: The essence of Whittier is our mission to provide high-quality, accessible health care and social services dedicated to achieving health equity for all. The trust that the community places in us is vital to fulfilling this mission. We understand that to accomplish our goals, we must demonstrate integrity and accountability in every interaction. Whether through our patient care services or community outreach initiatives, we continuously strive to cultivate an environment where individuals feel valued, heard, and supported. The trust nurtured by Whittier serves not only our patients, but also the broader Boston community. Our relationships with local organizations, businesses, and stakeholders depend on mutual respect and commitment to shared goals. These partnerships enable us to extend the reach of our health services, allowing us to address community issues strategically and effectively.

Building Trust among Community Members: In Fiscal Year 2023, we focused on expanding our community engagement efforts, understanding that trust between health care providers and community members is linked to better patient experiences and outcomes. Through various initiatives, we actively solicited feedback from those we serve, taking into account their voices when designing programs and services. For example, our Boston Health Equity Program, now in its 11th year, continues to receive accolades for its impact, illustrating how integrating community input into our health initiatives builds trust and fosters cooperation. Our approach has yielded tangible results, including a reduced life expectancy gap from 33 years to 23 years among community residents, as reported by the Boston Public Health Commission. Our contribution to this achievement is a testament to the collaborative spirit we share with community members who believe in our mission and trust our commitment to their well-being.



Trust in Health Services: At the heart of our service model, everyone deserves dignity and respect. The staff at Whittier, whom I am proud of, not only deliver health care and social services, but also serve as the embodiment of the trust we seek to create. Each day, they foster an environment of support by treating patients as whole individuals with unique backgrounds, experiences, and needs. In all programs including our CenteringPregnancy Group, we've seen firsthand how empowering community members with knowledge leads to stronger trust and better health outcomes. We have enhanced our efforts in maternal health equity, allowing us to offer comprehensive preconception, prenatal, and postpartum care.

Trust and Cultural Competency: In light of ongoing disparities in health outcomes, programs that enhance cultural competency are crucial. Patients must feel they can trust that their health care providers understand their cultural context and meet their specific needs. This year, we prioritized training our staff on the importance of cultural competency and empathy in interactions with patients from various backgrounds. When our patients see themselves reflected in our staff, whether through shared experiences, language, or cultural understanding, it cultivates deeper trust. It also affirms our commitment to breaking down barriers and ensuring equitable access to care. This is not merely about policies, it's about changing perceptions and unconscious bias and building a health care system that acknowledges and respects the individuals it serves.

Community Partnerships: A Trust-Building Strategy: Whittier recognizes that our mission extends beyond direct patient care. We actively engage with community organizations and local leaders to forge partnerships that fortify our efforts in addressing social determinants of health. By collaborating with schools, corporations, government agencies, and non-profit organizations, we can tackle broader systemic issues that affect health. Our first brick-and-mortar School Based Health Clinic at the Boston Day and Evening Academy is a prime example of this initiative. Establishing clinics like these fosters an integrated approach to health care, ensuring that students receive the comprehensive care they require in accessible and empathetic ways.

The Role of Transparency and Communication: At Whittier, we prioritize clear communication with our community members about the services we offer, the challenges we face, and the successes we celebrate. Open lines of communication allow us to address concerns, answer questions, and provide reassurance that we have the best interests of the community at heart. For instance, we expanded our Telehealth program this year to include remote consultations, but also remote monitoring for chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension.

Trust and Health Equity Research: The Whittier Health Equity Research Center is dedicated to examining the barriers communities face in accessing equitable health care. Our research initiatives aim to uncover the nuances of mistrust that exist in marginalized populations, particularly among individuals who identify as Black, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American. In our discussions with patients, it has become evident that historical injustices and personal experiences shape the perceptions of trust in health care. By acknowledging and addressing these issues, we can foster an atmosphere that promotes healing and re-establishes the connection between community members and health care providers.

Trust in the Context of COVID-19: The COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented challenges to health care systems globally, underscoring the real implications of trust in health. Patients who have experienced mistrust are less likely to seek necessary care, and health disparities are exacerbated. We worked diligently throughout the pandemic to combat misinformation and maintain access to healthcare and social services, such as our vaccine clinics, that prioritize the safety of community members.

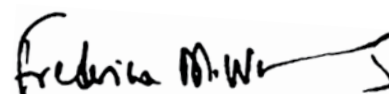
Being designated as a state-supported COVID-19 therapeutic site illustrates our commitment to maintaining trust. We aim to provide safe, effective treatments, while demonstrating that we value our community members' health as a priority.

Patient-Centered Care as a Trust-Building Mechanism: Patient-centered care is integral to establishing relationships between Whittier and the communities we serve. Each individual is treated as a partner in their healthcare journey, with an emphasis on active participation in decisions regarding their treatment. Our focus on understanding the unique needs of our patients allows us to tailor services, strengthening the trust they place in us. Patients who feel involved and valued in their health decisions are more likely to adhere to treatment plans, seek care when needed, and communicate openly with their providers. This reciprocal relationship is at the core of our mission and reflects our commitment to holistic health care, which acknowledges the complexities of every individual's experience.

Looking Forward: Sustaining Trust for Future Generations: As we look to the future, our vision at Whittier Street Health Center remains steadfast: to be a beacon of hope and health equity for all community members. Sustaining trust requires continued dedication to our values, transparency in our operations, and unwavering commitment to culturally competent care. We recognize that the road ahead is filled with challenges, but with your support, we can pave the way towards a more equitable health care landscape.

In closing, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for the unwavering support of our staff, donors, partners, and most importantly, our patients. Together, we can build a healthier, more equitable future, one rooted in trust and mutual respect.

With warm regards,



FREDERICA M. WILLIAMS

*President & CEO
Whittier Street Health Center*



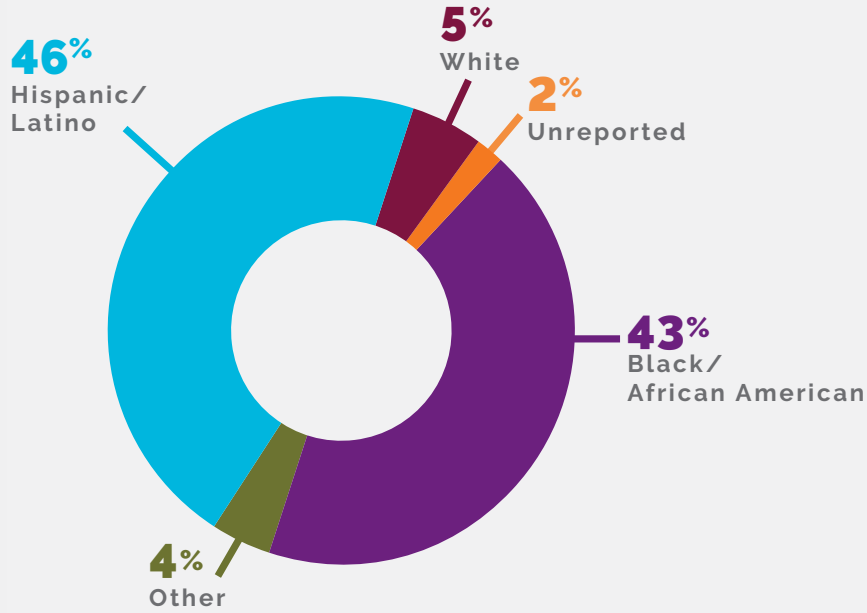
ALICIA WEDDERBURN

*Board Chair
Founder & CEO, Science Ed Consulting and
Lead Science Coach, Boston Public Schools*

Patients and Impact

Who We Care For

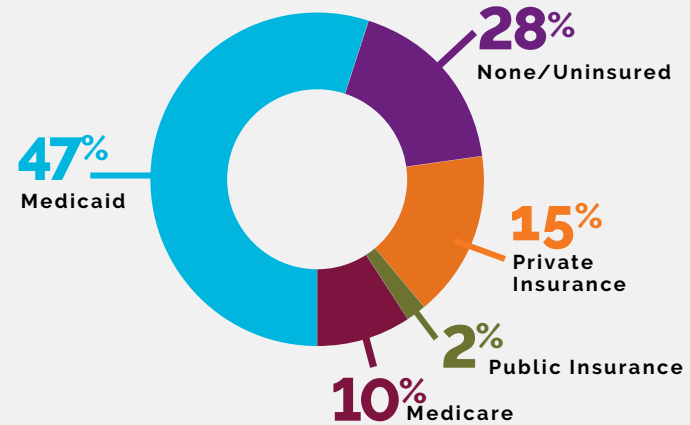
We serve a diverse patient population:



In FY2024, Whittier provided
\$3,383,913
 in free health care

100%
 of social services
 were provided
 free of charge

Patient Insurance Sources:



42% Male

58% Female

Over
30,000+
 people served

26% of our patients are uninsured

82% live in public housing

90% of patients with known income live at or below the Federal Poverty Level.

CenteringPregnancy Program

Maternal Health Reimagined

Angelica's Story



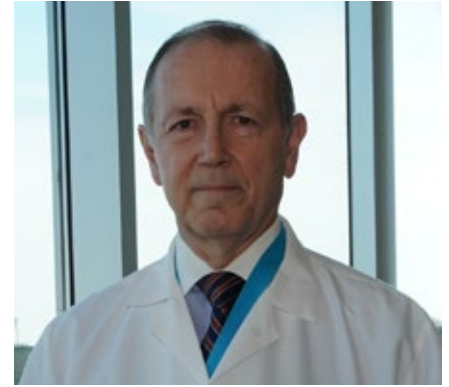
Whittier currently runs an initiative called CenteringPregnancy, which plays a vital role in improving health care

for expectant mothers, particularly in urban areas where access to care can be challenging. CenteringPregnancy brings women together in small groups to meet regularly, combining medical check-ups with educational sessions and support, crafting a warm and trusting environment for both the mothers and their healthcare providers.

Dr. Raja Sayegh, an obstetrician and gynecologist, sees firsthand how pregnancy can sometimes leave women feeling alone. "Pregnancy can be isolating for some women. The 10-12 women who are part of each class become their own community. They build their own relationships and get each other through their pregnancies. It's very empowering," he explains. Dr. Sayegh consistently ensures that women from all backgrounds receive care that respects their individual cultures and experiences. He often emphasized the importance of education, saying, "Education is a key component of the program. Knowledge and education is power. You learn something, adapt it to your own situation, and then pass it along." He aims to help expectant mothers, especially those new to parenting, feel informed and self-assured.

"Pregnancy can be isolating for some women. The 10-12 women who are part of each class become their own community. They build their own relationships and get each other through their pregnancies. It's very empowering."

— Dr. Raja Sayegh,
Lead Physician, Obstetrics and Gynecology Department



**Dr. Raja Sayegh, Lead Physician,
Obstetrics and Gynecology Department**

Angelica Adames first joined the CenteringPregnancy program during her early years of motherhood. She expressed gratitude for the educational support she received, which equipped her with essential knowledge about motherhood at a time when she felt inexperienced and unsure. "I've been part of CenteringPregnancy for both of my pregnancies and have learned so much. The first time, I was young and didn't know anything about motherhood. The second time, I found myself being a mentor to the other young mothers in the group. The CenteringPregnancy program taught me so much about caring for my babies. It was comforting to be in a space where I was valued and my heritage was integrated into the learning process."

The program served as a vital learning platform, gradually transforming her from a curious participant to a mentor for younger mothers, highlighting her growth

and commitment to giving back to the community. **Angelica** emphasized the unique empowering atmosphere fostered by the CenteringPregnancy program at Whittier Street Health Center. She described a profound sense of empowerment, underscoring how the program not only enhanced her abilities as a mother but also as a partner and individual.

"When you come to CenteringPregnancy, you feel beyond comfortable or safe, you feel empowered. Empowered that you'll be a better mom. Empowered that you'll be a better partner. Empowered that you'll be a better woman. There's not too many places where you can find that kind of support. Being part of the CenteringPregnancy group was an eye-opener. The program's educational sessions, tailored to everyone's level of understanding, empowered me with the confidence and knowledge I needed as a new mother."

Mobile Health Van

Healthcare on Wheels: Bringing Wellness to the Neighborhoods



David's **Story**

In Boston, our Mobile Health Van Program emerged as a crucial initiative for underserved communities, where access to healthcare is often a challenge. This program is designed to provide comprehensive health services directly to those who need it, offering routine and preventive care, screenings for chronic illnesses, mental health support, and connections to vital social services. By bringing these services directly to patients' doorsteps, the program significantly improves health outcomes for individuals who face barriers such as transportation issues or lack of health insurance.

For patients like **David Musonda**, an immigrant who constantly confronts daily challenges, the mobile van's visit to his doorstep marks a life-changing experience. "Now that the mobile van comes right to my doorstep, it has changed my life," **David** shared, emphasizing the ease with which he can access healthcare. At Whittier, the care approach is holistic. **David** observed, "When you're walking into a big hospital, they are very specific. They want to treat your broken leg or your headache, and then off you go. At Whittier, they want to know everything about me. Where am I staying? How am I eating? How can they help in other ways? The discussion is always bigger." This model not only addresses immediate health concerns but also considers broader aspects of well-being, offering a more inclusive type of care.

The program's focus extends to high-risk demographics, including the unhoused, low-income families, and racial and ethnic minorities. Each mobile unit is equipped not just for primary care but also for targeted screenings like HIV and Hepatitis C tests, which are vital for at-risk groups. **David** praises Whittier as "the epitome of 'teaching a man to fish,'" highlighting the empowerment and self-sufficiency that come with education and support.

Integral to the effectiveness of the Mobile Health Van Program are the community health workers, who provide essential health education and help patients navigate available resources, ensuring comprehensive care. "We meet individuals where they are. In the community where they live. We educate them; we engage them; and we empower them to be better," said **Amaka Ofonagoro**, a Whittier nurse practitioner. She observes the powerful change in people when they engage with Whittier's services: "When people come into Whittier and they see that everyone here is looking out for their best interest, you can see people get more relaxed. You can see it in their expressions. You can see it in their body language. When people are heard and respected, there is so much positive energy." This commitment to empathy and respect fosters an environment of trust, where individuals feel valued and empowered to improve their health and lives.

Through this combination of immediate healthcare access and emotional support, Whittier's Mobile Health Van Program not only saves lives but also instills a sense of dignity and empowerment among the communities it serves. As **David** succinctly states, "Whittier is saving lives on the street. There's just no other way to put it."



Amaka Ofonagoro, Whittier Nurse Practitioner

"We meet individuals where they are. In the community where they live. We educate them; we engage them; and we empower them to be better...When people are heard and respected, there is so much positive energy."

*—Amaka Ofonagoro,
Whittier Nurse Practitioner*

Comprehensive Care for Chronic Conditions

Holistic Health, Lasting Impact



In the vibrant communities of Mattapan, Roxbury, and Jamaica Plain, Whittier Street Health Center stands as a beacon of healing. Here, addressing chronic conditions in underserved communities is not just a mission; it's a way of life. Whittier implements a multifaceted system of care designed to integrate community outreach, wellness support, and comprehensive care coordination, particularly for individuals grappling with chronic illnesses such as asthma. This approach goes beyond mere clinical management, encompassing the broader social determinants of health that can influence disease progression and overall well-being.

Whittier's asthma program is a testament to the effectiveness of holistic and community-centered healthcare, inviting reflections from both **Dr. Robin Mayfield** and asthma patient **Abosedé Alabi**. **Dr. Robin Mayfield**, Lead Physician of Whittier's Family Medicine department, emphasizes a holistic approach to healthcare that aligns with Whittier's strategy in addressing asthma management. She advocates for understanding the interconnections between different healthcare strategies and the patients' environments, which include treating the underlying inflammation in asthma through natural remedies and lifestyle adjustments. This approach resonates with Whittier's focus on comprehensive asthma care, which integrates medical treatment with environmental and lifestyle modifications.



Dr. Robin Mayfield, Lead Physician of Whittier's Family Medicine department.

Patients like **Abosede Alabi** who has relied on Whittier for over a decade, showcase the center's community impact. For **Abosede**, Whittier is more than a healthcare provider; it's a vital part of her family's life: "Whittier feels like home. I've been here since 2007 and now my entire family comes here. I do my dental and eye care. I've used the OBGYN services when I was having my children. My husband and I do all our primary care there. It's a safe place."

Abosede Alabi, shared her personal experience, praising Whittier for its culturally competent care, expressing trust in the program due to the relatable and understanding nature of its healthcare providers. "'There's a trust I have with Whittier because of who they hire. When the doctors look like me. When they talk like me. When they understand what coming from Nigeria is like...that's a good feeling."

Abosede highlighted the importance of feeling understood and supported as a member of the Nigerian community, reflecting on how Whittier's asthma program serves as a safe and reliable cornerstone in her family's healthcare journey. This synergy between patient trust and holistic caregiving encapsulates the program's success in fostering health equity and improving outcomes for diverse populations

Tokunbo Ekpebor, a registered nurse at Whittier's Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine Clinic, reflects on the broader vision of health equity. "Without Whittier, the world would be a much darker place," she said. "If everyone is taken care of health-wise, then the world is a better place for everyone." This



Tokunbo Ekpebor, a registered nurse at Whittier's Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine Clinic

deep understanding fuels Whittier's commitment to implementing comprehensive services, including regular health assessments, educational resources, and specialist referrals, ensuring patients with chronic conditions receive the support they need.

Aida Marcial has received care at Whittier Street Health Center for **42 years**. She emphasized the consistent improvement in her care over the years, particularly the extensive one-on-one time her

doctors spend with her and her family. This personalized care has made Whittier a safe haven for **Aida**, where she feels understood and supported in managing her chronic conditions. "Whittier has always offered care that goes beyond just treating what's on the surface. The ability to access dental and eye care, as well as mental health support, in one place has been invaluable to me and my family. It's like they take care of the whole person, not just a part of us. I appreciate how Whittier embraces our community. Being part of programs that are designed to understand our differences and address health issues makes a huge difference. I always feel like my voice is heard in my own language, which makes a huge difference in my care. It's good to have doctors and staff who can communicate with me. They make sure everyone feels included and respected."



Aida Marcial, Whittier Patient

Aida expressed her appreciation for Whittier's comprehensive approach to healthcare. This holistic model has been crucial for her and her family, as it addresses not just isolated health issues but their overall well-being. She remarked on how Whittier's commitment to treating the "whole person" rather than just specific symptoms has greatly enhanced her quality of life over the years. **Aida's** reflections revealed how such programs have not only helped in managing her diabetes effectively but also empowered her to take proactive steps in maintaining her overall health. "I've been coming to Whittier for 42 years and during that time, my care has only gotten better. My doctors spend so much one-on-one time with me and my family. It's such a safe place. The dedication of Whittier to provide community health programs has helped me stay engaged and active in managing my overall well-being. I've learned that health is more than just doctor visits."

At Whittier, promoting healthy development in children with asthma remains a critical focus. Recognizing that asthma is among the most prevalent chronic diseases in children, Whittier adopts a comprehensive strategy to manage this condition effectively. **Dr. Stephen Wright**, Whittier's Medical Director, underscores the importance of creating a supportive environment

for patients: "If you're in a place where you feel comfortable, you're more apt to communicate with your medical team because you feel safe and in a trusting environment." This philosophy guides Whittier's approach, emphasizing early diagnosis, continuous management, and a strong partnership with families to empower them with the knowledge and resources needed for effective asthma care.

Dr. Wright adds, "Every day at Whittier starts the same way. 'Hello. Thank you for being here. How can we make things easier for you?' and if I don't have the answer, I'm going to walk down the hall and talk to all the really smart people who work here – and we're going to get you an answer." This emphasis on open communication and collaboration is crucial in fostering a trusting relationship between the medical team and families. Through partnerships with local schools, community organizations, and health coalitions, Whittier strives to promote asthma awareness, ensuring families feel supported and engaged in managing their children's health.

Whittier is acutely aware of the formidable barriers that underserved communities face in accessing quality healthcare for chronic conditions. Economic instability, lack of transportation, and limited health literacy can impede timely care access and adherence to treatment plans. In response, Whittier has developed targeted initiatives to reduce these barriers. The center collaborates with local organizations to provide transportation services, offer financial counseling to navigate healthcare costs, and employ community health workers who play a crucial role in linking patients to local resources and support systems.

Dr. Wright passionately states, "Whatever it takes. We're going to take care of you." His words encapsulate the spirit of Whittier's commitment to overcoming systemic challenges and improving health outcomes. "We need to be available. We need to be accessible. We need to be affable," he continues. "For people coming to Whittier from another country or culture, if they can come in and see a friendly face with a smile, that can make all the difference in their initial impression of who we are."



"Whatever it takes. We're going to take care of you. We need to be available. We need to be accessible. We need to be affable."

—Dr. Stephen Wright,
Whittier's Medical Director

Family Health Project

Almost 1 in 5 children in America live in families with incomes below the poverty line. Growing up in poverty increases exposure to factors that can significantly impair child brain development and lead to poor health outcomes.

Family Health Project has undertaken a simple, replicable program to help new mothers and their babies facing life without enough money. Family Health Project provides new mothers with \$400 per month for 36 months without condition.

Poverty is unacceptable. Direct giving is one scalable solution.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Modeled after the pathbreaking study, Baby's First Years, Family Health Project has four elements:

- **Referrals:** A Federally Qualified Health Center refers participants to us,
- **Money transfer:** \$400 is sent to mothers via a debit card every month,
- **Support:** Ongoing support is provided to moms,
- **Funding:** The project is funded solely by gifts from individuals

Health Equity Research

Advancing Health Justice through Collaborative Research

Bright Mailosi, a dedicated Research Study Coordinator, actively contributes to addressing health disparities through his work with the Health Equity Research Team at Whittier. This team is committed to bridging gaps in healthcare delivery by focusing on social determinants of health that disproportionately affect Boston's diverse communities. Every day, they explore ways to serve populations that are often overlooked by the healthcare system. Bright underscores the significance of their mission with his insight, "Every day we ask 'What can we document to make a case on what services to bring to people who otherwise would not receive the same standard of healthcare as everyone else?'"

Bright's efforts with the Health Equity Research Team reflect a profound commitment to collaboration across various disciplines. By working closely with researchers, clinicians, and community partners, the team integrates diverse perspectives, implement clinical trials, enhances research initiatives, and develops interventions that are both culturally relevant and contextually applicable.

The Health Equity Research Team understands that community involvement is crucial in addressing the specific needs of vulnerable populations. Bright and his colleagues actively engage patients and their families in the research process, ensuring that their voices are incorporated into the design and execution of projects. This participatory approach empowers community members and cultivates a sense of ownership and trust, enhancing the effectiveness of the interventions implemented.

During his time in Boston, Bright remains driven by Whittier's overarching mission of promoting health equity. He operates with the understanding that while Massachusetts boasts some of the best healthcare globally, many communities within the state still struggle to access these services. Whittier's targeted approach of the Health Equity Research Team not only addresses these disparities but also exemplifies a model for integrated healthcare practices that can be replicated elsewhere.

Economic Inequity

Bridging the Gap: Economic Empowerment for Better Health

Anna's **Story**



Recognizing the intrinsic link between economic stability and health, Whittier's Economic Inequity Team implements programs that provide financial counseling, workforce development, and essential benefits assistance. Their efforts aim to equip individuals and families with the tools needed to navigate a complex landscape and achieve economic independence. The work is deeply personal and transformative, as evidenced by the journey of two remarkable individuals—**Christine** and **Anna**.

Anna Rodriguez, LCSW, a former patient at Whittier who struggled with mental health challenges and economic instability took a positive turn when she crossed paths with **Christine Pajarillo, LICSW**, and Vice President of Programs and Social Services at Whittier. In the role of patient/mental health provider, Christine saw potential in Anna and encouraged her to pursue her dreams of becoming a mental health provider herself. When the patient/provider relationship ended, the mentor/guide relationship began.

"When I met Anna, I immediately saw something special. Her resilience and potential were not only evident, but truly remarkable. I understood that with the right support and guidance, she could achieve great things," said **Christine**. "And I believe Anna's journey is emblematic of the broader experiences of many underserved individuals we serve. There are countless others with similar potential, waiting for someone to acknowledge their potential. I'm just so proud of her."

Christine emphasized, "My hope is that through collective support and empowerment, we can nurture countless success stories like Anna's, transforming not just individual lives but entire communities."

"I was inspired by Christine's faith in me when I didn't necessarily believe in myself," **Anna** reflected. "Her support was my foundation, and with it, I found the courage to not just overcome my challenges, but to help others do the same. I am acutely aware of the systemic barriers that underserved communities often face. My goal is to help dismantle these obstacles and create opportunities for others like myself. Being part of this incredible team allows me to serve as a bridge between the challenges our communities face and the support they deserve."

Anna not only completed her degree, but also returned to Whittier as a Child and Family Behavioral Health Clinician, working alongside Christine to support others in their journeys to health and empowerment. "From patient to provider, my journey has come full circle, and I'm honored to be part of this incredible team," **Anna** expressed with pride.

The journey of Christine and Anna highlights Whittier's holistic approach to healthcare—addressing economic and social determinants alongside healthcare needs. It exemplifies how mentoring and nurturing can turn personal challenges into opportunities for growth and giving back to the community. The Economic Inequity Team's work demonstrates that health care is not just about treating illnesses, but about building a supportive, equitable framework for well-being.



Christine Pajarillo (left) and Anna Rodriguez (right).

"I was inspired by Christine's faith in me when I didn't necessarily believe in myself. Her support was my foundation, and with it, I found the courage to not just overcome my challenges, but to help others do the same."

*—Anna Rodriguez, LCSW
Former patient at Whittier*

Housing as Healthcare

Beyond Shelter: Home is Where the Health Is



Whittier Street Health Center has championed the concept that “housing is healthcare.” This innovative perspective is reshaping public health discourse by emphasizing that stable and safe housing is crucial for achieving positive health outcomes. Whittier understands that to effectively address the barriers faced by vulnerable populations, healthcare must be holistic, integrating both medical and social determinants, including housing stability. Through its initiatives, Whittier not only treats illnesses but also tackles the

underlying social factors impacting health.

For many individuals at Whittier, homelessness directly correlates with deteriorating health outcomes. **Fedelyne Maurice**, a case worker in **Whittier’s Day Engagement Center** for the unhoused, articulates the challenges faced by the unhoused. “Your basic needs are not being met, which makes it difficult to focus on anything else.” Individuals experiencing homelessness often encounter increased risks for chronic diseases and mental health disorders due to the lack of stable shelter, nutritious food, and proper hygiene. This creates a vicious cycle where

poor health can lead to homelessness, and homelessness exacerbates health issues.

Recognizing these challenges, Whittier employs an integrated care model that combines healthcare services with housing support. **Dr. Stephen Wright**, Whittier’s Medical Director, emphasizes the importance of treating the whole person: “We are treating the whole person. Their ailments may present as heart disease, or diabetes, but we’re treating them holistically. We know a lot about the medical process and how to fix things, but that’s not enough. For true healing to take place, you have



“You can fix a lot of health issues with medicine, but if you're unhoused, your basic needs are not being met, which makes it difficult to focus on anything else.”

—Fedelyne Maurice, *case worker in Whittier's Day Engagement Program for the unhoused*

to care for the person physically, mentally, and emotionally.” This holistic approach is reflected in initiatives like partnerships with housing organizations and the implementation of mobile health services, which aim to address both medical and social determinants of health.

The convergence of immigration and housing insecurity presents unique challenges at Whittier. Immigrants and migrants, often burdened by financial constraints, and social discrimination, face exacerbated health issues due to unstable housing conditions. Whittier

addresses these challenges through both health services and advocacy for comprehensive housing policies. **Fedelyne** reinforced the importance of cultural representation in care, “It's important for us to be representative of our community. When they come to us, we have to be able to see them. We have to be able to hear them. We have to be able to help them. To do that, we have to be like them.”

Whittier is distinct in its commitment to its patients' overall well-being. **Delouis Bien-Aime**, a new immigrant, Whittier patient and recent hire in the Facilities department, highlights this dedication: “Whittier is different, because they care about the person more than their healthcare problems. They help with housing applications; they help with finding food solutions and employment. They care more, so they do more.” This focus on comprehensive care underscores Whittier's proactive approach to dismantling structural barriers and promoting health equity. By treating housing as an integral part of healthcare, Whittier ensures that individuals receive the support necessary to thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally, creating a healthier community for all.



“ Whittier is different, because they care about the person more than their healthcare problems. They help with housing applications; they help with finding food solutions and employment. They care more, so they do more”

—Delouis Bien-Aime
Whittier patient and recent hire in the Facilities department



Mental Wellness

Minds Matter: Innovative Approaches to Better Mental Health



Carolyn
Reynolds

**MEd, Associate Director of
Adult and Substance Use Services**

Leslie
Gore

**Whittier Street Health
Center Patient**

Whittier Street Health Center is a sanctuary for those seeking mental wellness and support. Committed to addressing the diverse needs of its community, Whittier offers a comprehensive array of mental wellness initiatives designed to empower and heal.

These programs provide individual and group counseling services tailored to various mental health issues, alongside substance use disorder treatment and crisis intervention. Preventive mental health programs further enrich the community's well-being by offering proactive support. Additionally, specialized youth programs integrate mental health services with primary care to ensure a holistic approach to patient health.

Carolyn Reynolds, MEd, Associate Director of Adult and Substance Use Services, emphasizes the importance of community involvement: "At Whittier, we firmly believe that community engagement is the cornerstone of effective mental health care. By actively involving our community members, we not only build trust and tailor our programs to their specific needs, we work towards reducing the stigma surrounding mental health. Our approach empowers individuals to take charge of their mental wellness and creates a supportive network within their own communities." This philosophy is reflected in Whittier's peer support programs, where individuals with lived experiences mentor and support others facing similar challenges.

Whittier has honed its strategies to meet the unique needs of Boston's underserved communities. Cultural competency is a priority, ensuring that services are sensitive and appropriate to the diverse backgrounds of residents. **Reynolds** articulated, "Our services are designed to be culturally sensitive and appropriate, reflecting the diverse backgrounds of the community. Staff are trained to understand cultural nuances and how they impact mental health." By actively engaging community members in program development and feedback, Whittier ensures that its services truly resonate with and benefit those it serves. The center's integrated care model integrates behavioral health services with primary health care for a

"In behavioral health, it's not easy to find people you trust...They're open. They're kind. They listen."

—Leslie Gore, *Whittier Street Health Center Patient*

"Our services are designed to be culturally sensitive and appropriate, reflecting the diverse backgrounds of the community."

—Carolyn Reynolds,
MEd, Associate Director of Adult and Substance Use Services

comprehensive approach, offering low or no-cost services and flexible hours to accommodate varying schedules.

For **Leslie Gore**, a mental health patient, Whittier's environment has been transformative. "In behavioral health, it's not easy to find people you trust. I have not met a person at Whittier that doesn't make me feel welcome. They're open. They're kind. They listen," she shared. This sense of belonging and the comprehensive care available have been life-changing for many like Leslie. "Being a part of the Whittier program has been a blessing for me. I'm much more self-aware now. I'm now able to know when I'm depressed and I couldn't do that before."

Whittier recognizes the profound impact of social determinants such as income, housing, and education on mental health. The center's strategies to overcome barriers include combating stigma, reducing costs, ensuring access to insurance, and expanding the availability of services. "Individuals from underserved communities may face systemic discrimination, which can lead to feelings of hopelessness and low self-worth, further impacting mental health. We address these determinants by providing integrated care, community outreach, and support services," **Carolyn** noted.

Leslie's journey reflected the vital role Whittier played: "I was homeless for 7 months. If Whittier wasn't here, I wouldn't be here today. Physically and mentally, I was able to shower. I was able to see my clinician. I was able to start on my road to being well. Whittier became my family when my family wasn't there for me." This nurturing environment has fostered not only her recovery but also her growth. She became part of a patient sewing group offering solidarity and healing. "We started a patient sewing group to help a lot of us women through our issues. It's called '**Peace-Full Hands**' to use both to do something with our hands, but also to be with other people. We became a group of sisters. We get each other through the hard times."

Thank You, Donors

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Compassion in Action

WSHC DONOR

DR. JEFFREY LEIDEN, MD, PhD

Executive Chairman, Vertex Pharmaceuticals


Dr. Jeffrey Leiden MD, PhD serves as the Executive Chairman of Vertex Pharmaceuticals and has established a profound impact on health equity through his support of Whittier. His commitment not only exemplifies the essential role that donors play in promoting access to quality healthcare for underserved populations, but also shows a personal commitment to Whittier itself.

"At Vertex Pharmaceuticals we believe in innovation to create transformative medicines that change or cure diseases; and we also believe that all people should have access to those medicines regardless of their ability to pay or the zip code they live in," said Leiden.

The financial contributions made by donors like Dr. Leiden, and you, are crucial for sustaining programs that provide health and social services to vulnerable communities, ensuring that individuals receive the care they need, regardless of their economic or social standing. Support helps to bolster these initiatives and highlights the importance of philanthropy in addressing systemic healthcare disparities.

"Whittier exemplifies a scalable, community-centric healthcare paradigm that has the potential for widespread implementation across Boston and other major metropolitan areas," said Leiden. "What sets Whittier apart is their comprehensive strategy: addressing fundamental social determinants of health, delivering high-quality medical care, and advancing medical science through research. This multifaceted approach not only serves the immediate Boston community, but also contributes to the broader landscape of healthcare innovation."

Donating to WSHC is particularly significant because it aligns with the broader mission of championing



"At Vertex Pharmaceuticals we believe in innovation to create transformative medicines that change or cure diseases; and we also believe that all people should have access to those medicines regardless of their ability to pay or the zip code they live in,"

- DR. JEFFREY LEIDEN, MD, PhD

Executive Chairman, Vertex Pharmaceuticals

health justice for all. Health equity, defined as the effort to provide fair and just opportunities for everyone to attain their highest level of health, addresses the deep-rooted social, economic, and environmental factors that contribute to health disparities.

Dr. Leiden added "By supporting Whittier, donors contribute to the elimination of barriers that marginalized communities face in accessing healthcare. This philanthropic effort not only uplifts individual lives, but also strengthens society, fostering an environment where everyone has an opportunity to thrive."

Dr. Leiden, and the thousands of donors like him, have seen that investing in health equity initiatives at WSHC is a call to action for all individuals who share the vision of a healthier and more equitable Boston. Each donation acts as a catalyst for change, creating lasting effects that can transform the health landscape for future generations, ultimately leading to societal improvements that benefit everyone in Massachusetts and beyond.

YEAR IN REVIEW Recognition

FOR HEALTH CARE QUALITY



GOLD 2023
Check. Change. Control.
Cholesterol™ for care of patients
with high cholesterol



GOLD 2023
Target: Type 2 Diabetes for care of
patients with type 2 diabetes and
cardiovascular risk factors



SILVER 2023
For commitment to improving blood
pressure control among adults



The Joint Commission renewed
accreditation for Ambulatory
Care and Behavioral Health



Certificate of Recognition with Distinction:
Behavioral Health Integration



TOP 100 WOMEN-LED BUSINESSES

Frederica M. Williams President & CEO

Top 100 Women-Led Businesses by
Women's Edge and the Boston Globe Magazine,
for eleventh consecutive year



EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

PRESIDENT'S AWARD RECIPIENT

Sandra Rojas Mendoza, RN



Sandra Rojas Mendoza, is a compassionate and devoted registered nurse whose professional journey and personal mission have deeply impacted countless lives. Born in Colombia, Sandra's core belief in the power of service to enrich lives has guided her in delivering exceptional patient care for nearly seven years.

Sandra's academic achievements at Regis College in Weston, MA, laid the groundwork for her distinguished career at Whittier Street Health Center, where she commenced her journey in 2017. In her role, she has not only mastered the complexities of primary care but has also built profound connections with both patients and her healthcare team.

Her dedication and ability to communicate effectively have earned her the admiration and respect of her peers and superiors. However, Sandra's influence extends well beyond the confines of the healthcare facility. She is a passionate champion for community health, dedicated to improving the well-being of underserved communities through education and direct engagement. Sandra's empathetic approach and commitment to holistic care ensure that every individual she interacts with receives top-notch, compassionate treatment.

40 YEARS OF SERVICE AWARD

Daniel Auguste



As I stand here today, I can say that my heart and spirit are extremely full to do what I love! I have been so blessed to wake up every day for the last 40 years and come to a job that turned into a career that I am deeply passionate about.

Not too many people get to say that they love their job or love what they do and for that, I am so grateful. I have experienced so much support, encouragement, and compassion from my Whittier family and community over the course of the years, especially during the most challenging times.

I remember when I was working at a factory in Hyde Park before I came to work at Whittier and there was a guy who was at the company for 40 years, and I said to myself that I would never work at a job for 40.

The saying goes never say never because you just never know how life will unfold. I have spent the majority of my life at Whittier with lots of changes and growth that I would not change for anything in this world. From a \$5 million budget to a \$35 million budget, from renting to owning a building and managing multiple sites, from 100 employees to 350 active employees. I was here to witness the powerful evolution that is Whittier.

When you follow a great leader, great things happen and for that I want to express my deepest gratitude to Ms. Williams for her leadership and dedication to Whittier. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to the Whittier team, who have become family. It has been an amazing journey and one that I am not ready to end as yet.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Financial Report

Quality health care is a human right, the foundation for economic opportunity, and the result of investments by funders and generous supporters. Bolstered by strong financial performance and continued viability, Whittier will continue mobilizing for health equity and social justice.

Balance Sheet

ASSETS

Current	\$ 29,687,678
Fixed Assets	\$ 27,825,172
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 57,512,850

LIABILITIES

Current	\$ 3,609,166
Long term	\$ 4,856,171
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 8,465,337

NET ASSETS

\$ 49,047,513

TOTAL LIABILITIES

\$ 57,512,850

Statement of Activities

REVENUE

Patient Services Revenue	\$ 14,714,854
Grants and Contracts	\$ 14,115,463
Fundraising and Contributions	\$ 1,066,840
Other	\$ 4,662,595
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 34,559,752

EXPENSES

Clinical Programs	\$ 27,644,875
Administration and Finance	\$ 1,893,895
Facilities	\$ 3,355,364
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 32,894,134

NET OPERATING INCOME/(LOSS)

\$ 1,665,618

NET NON-OPERATING INCOME(LOSS)

\$ 1,265,991

CHANGE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS

\$ 2,931,609

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YEAR IN REVIEW

Signature Events

Whittier's Toast of

Dr. JEFFREY LEIDEN

Executive Chairman, Vertex Pharmaceuticals



Women for Whittier Holiday Tea



24th Annual Men's Health Summit



Hispanic Heritage Celebration

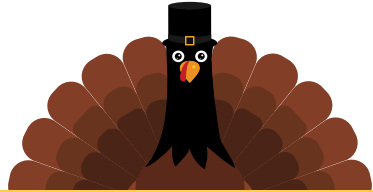


YEAR IN REVIEW

Community and Health Events

November 2023

- Turkey Giveaway



February 2024

- Black History Month Celebration/ Annual Meeting
- National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day



December 2023

- Senior Holiday Event
- World AIDS Day
- Clean Teeth for Toys



April 2024

- Alcohol Awareness Month Kickoff Event



May 2024

- Community Garden Opening
- Mother's Day Celebration
- Mental Health Awareness Month Event
- AAPI Heritage Month Celebration



January 2024

- Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service



June 2024

- National HIV Testing Day
- Men's Health Summit



August 2024

- National Health Center Week
- Back to School BBQ
- Caribbean Carnival



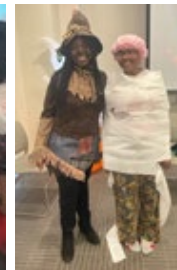
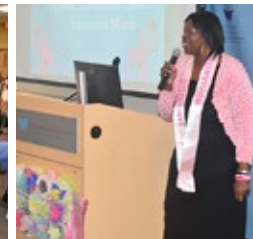
September 2024

- It Takes a Village Event
- Healthy Aging Month



October 2024

- Hispanic Heritage Month Event
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month Event
- 2024 Community Needs Assessment Listening Session
- Boo to Bad Health
- Latinx Aids Awareness Day





WHITTIER STREET HEALTH CENTER

Comprehensive. Compassionate. Community.

Whittier Street Health Center
FREDERICA M. WILLIAMS BUILDING
1290 Tremont Street
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Do you believe in health equity and racial justice for every resident of Boston?
Then please support our work!

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Frederica M. Williams Building
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