



Summit convenes leaders to address East Boston health needs

By Katie Hamilton
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The corporate citizenship team recently partnered with the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center to convene more than 40 East Boston community leaders to jump-start further collaboration and share plans for the health center's expanded community resource and wellness center, which will open later in 2020.

The summit, held at Well-B, our innovation center, brought together more than 20 East Boston community organizations. Manny Lopes, Blue Cross board member and CEO of East Boston Neighborhood Health Center welcomed the group. Lucy Darragh, our director of civic engagement, and Molly Mazzaferro, director of innovation, led the group through a design-thinking session. During the half-day workshop, the group empathized with the experiences of community members, defined the problems facing East Boston residents, and began to discuss and brainstorm how the group might address these issues.

“Engaging our community is crucial for us to design impactful programming that will help our neighbors live healthier lives,” Lopes said. “We’re excited to take the results from these productive conversations and bring it back to the health center to shape our next steps as we develop the space and the programs that will take place inside.”

The East Boston Neighborhood Health Center has been a vital part of its community for more than 40 years, providing easily accessible, high-quality health care to all who live and work in East Boston and the surrounding communities of Chelsea, Revere, Everett, and Winthrop. The center supports over 1,000 employees and handles 300,000 visits per year – more than any other ambulatory care center in New England. Their new community resource and wellness center will be a one-stop-shop for health and well-being in the community - a shared space for organizations to connect and serve East Boston community members.

“At Blue Cross, we believe in the power of collaboration to advance change,” says Jeff Bellows, vice president of corporate citizenship and public affairs at Blue Cross. “We are excited to work with EBNHC and the East Boston community and look forward to an ongoing partnership with the wellness center to improve access to healthy living opportunities for East Boston residents.”



Next iteration of Dot Rx

The collaboration with East Boston Neighborhood Health Center is the next iteration of our successful Healthy Living accelerator program, which will build upon the success of Dot Rx, a partnership with Codman Square Health Center and five Dorchester nonprofits to connect families to healthy living programming within their neighborhood. Launched in 2017, Dot Rx has matched more than 160 families with personalized coaches who have connected families with free or reduced-rate healthy living programs.

Over the past year, we have ensured that Dot Rx is sustainable for the future. We have funded a full-time program manager who works within the Codman Square Health Center to oversee provider referrals and the coach-matching process. Our corporate citizenship team still plays a leadership role in convening the Dot Rx program partners and reimbursing the cost of the participants' healthy living programming, but we will focus our efforts in the year ahead on facilitating the collaboration among East Boston Neighborhood Health Center and East Boston nonprofits to expand our impact in a new community.

Katie Hamilton

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