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BEACON HILL, ROXBURY

Two Boston hospitals in running for Livestrong grants

Posted by Matt Rocheleau May 26, 2011 02:02 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Two Boston hospitals – Whittier Street Health Center in Roxbury and Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center – are in the running to receive grant funding from the Lance Armstrong Foundation's Livestrong campaign.

The "Community Impact Project" will fund up to 90 programs at hospitals, cancer centers, community organizations and universities nationwide with over \$700,000 available in awards.

Selected institutions are eligible for up to \$10,000 each through online voting -- that ends May 31 -- divided among eight geographical regions. Within those regions, institutions are eligible through one of four programs. The programs are designed to improve the lives of cancer survivors both during and post treatment, according to the Livestrong project. Top vote-getters will be chosen for funding.

The Whittier Street Health Center is eligible for the "Promotores Program," which aims "to address the needs of Hispanic/Latino cancer survivors," by increasing Hispanic/Latino community health workers' knowledge and confidence on the physical, emotional and day-to-day concerns of cancer survivors through added training and education, according to the voting site.

The Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center is eligible for the "Cancer Transitions" program, which "is designed to support, educate and empower people with cancer in the transitional period after treatment is over," through support groups, education, nutrition, exercise and addressing other medical management, psychosocial and quality of life issues, the site says.

Whittier recently was selected for a national program to educate and treat residents affected by HIV. The health center will nearly double the capacity of its services through its new 78,000 square foot facility that is slated for completion in early 2012.

"By offering the 'Promotores Program,' we seek to reach out to the ever increasing number of Latino cancer survivors in the community who are not currently connected to survivorship programming," the health center said in its grant application. "A particular focus will be on recent immigrants who were treated for cancer prior to arriving in the country."

The hospital, which opened a cancer survivorship clinic in 2008, says of the 14,500 patients it serves presently, over 40 percent identify as

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Mass General received a "Cancer Transitions" grant last year -- the inaugural year of Livestrong's "Community Impact Project."

"The 'Cancer Transitions' program gives us the opportunity to provide psycho educational programming to our growing survivor community," the hospital said in its grant application. "With additional funding and in partnership with our new Survivors Clinic, we hope to implement this evidence-based model at the Mass General North Shore Cancer Center in Danvers, Massachusetts, in addition to sustaining it at our main Boston campus through the infrastructure of the HOPES program ... [which] focuses on improving the quality of life and well-being of patients with cancer, their families and friends through free wellness services plus education and support workshops."

Last year, Livestrong says 175,000 people voted and the foundation awarded 80 sites ultimately providing support to over 30,000 nationwide affected by cancer. Voting this year began in mid-May.

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