

# **Brockton Neighborhood Health Center**



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## **Executive Summary**

Brockton Neighborhood Health Center (BNHC) is a non-profit, multicultural, community health center. Incorporated in 1992, BNHC began providing services in 1994 in a mobile medical van operating out of a church parking lot. Since then, the center has rapidly grown to provide desperately needed services to low-income and marginalized populations in the greater Brockton area. The health center, recognized by the city of Brockton for its contributions to the economic development of downtown Brockton, is committed to providing care that is responsive to community health needs and is linguistically, culturally and financially accessible.

BNHC serves an extremely diverse patient population including Brazilian, Cape Verdean, Haitian, Latino, Portuguese, African American and Caucasian, 74% of whom live in poverty. An additional 17% have income levels below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines. The health center currently offers primary, preventive and specialty health, mental health and dental services to 27,589 patients; provided 160,520 patient visits in Fiscal Year 2014, and continues to grow rapidly in Fiscal Year 2014. This rapid and sustained growth requires strong management, efficient systems and adequate space.

Over a seven-year period beginning in 2007, Brockton Neighborhood Health Center has quadrupled in size to meet the healthcare needs of low-income, diverse, medically underserved patients in Brockton and surrounding communities. Today, the *NEW* health center is an 89,948 sq. ft. five-story facility located in the center of downtown Brockton on a once blighted lot in the heart of Brockton's federally designated Medically Underserved Area.

The original \$17 million building opened in November 2007 and enabled BNHC to consolidate three of its four sites, increasing operating space from 21,000 to 59,448 sq. ft. A portion of the main building's ground floor is leased to an independent retail pharmacy to ensure BNHC patients have convenient access to needed discounted medications.

In July 2010, the health center opened a 6,100 sq. ft. Urgent Care Center, bringing operating space to 65,548 sq. ft. On September 10, 2012 (the same day we had our (1,000,000<sup>th</sup> patient visit) we opened a 24,400 sq. ft., four-floor building above the Urgent Care Center. The 2010 and 2012 construction projects greatly expand services for urgent care, adult medicine, eye care, behavioral health, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, doubled dental examination rooms and launched X-ray services on site provided by Good Samaritan Medical Center.

Services include pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, adult medicine, urgent care, dental, mental health, psychiatry, social services, vision services, STD testing and treatment, neurology, radiology, nephrology services, gastroenterology, teen clinic, HIV services, nutrition and patient education. The health center operates a satellite clinic at Brockton's homeless shelter, MainSpring House.

## **Brockton Neighborhood Health Center**

Brockton Neighborhood Health Center was chartered and incorporated in 1992 by a core group of concerned residents in the greater Brockton area who saw a definite and desperate need for services. At

that time, Brockton was the only city of its size in Massachusetts that had not yet opened a health center. It had only three full-time physicians providing primary and preventive health care to the 26,551 residents residing in the federally designated Medically Underserved Area (MUA) of downtown Brockton. The population of the MUA was extremely diverse and up to 35% of families lived in poverty.

## **Patient Care Model**

One of the health center's key tenets is to provide care and services in partnership with patients. As part of its patient care model, BNHC educates its patients about preventive health care, from disease transmission to substance abuse to nutrition, in order to achieve and maintain positive health outcomes. Taking personal responsibility for one's health is one of the most important lessons patients, young and old, learn. In addition to direct health care services, BNHC provides the educational tools to support this endeavor.

Brockton Neighborhood Health Center was chosen in 2011 to be part of the three-year, 50-Practice Pilot Group for the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) initiative in Massachusetts. The PCMH model is designed to promote comprehensive, coordinated, patient-centered care delivered by teams of primary care providers, including physicians, nurses, community health workers, behavioral health and mental health providers and all other staff members with whom patients come into contact. In a patient-centered medical home, a primary care provider and members of his or her team coordinate all of a patient's health needs, including management of chronic conditions, visits to specialists, hospital admissions, and reminds patients when they need check-ups and tests.

This transformation includes all departments, not only those involved with hands-on care. From the moment patients call for their appointments, we let them know we are here to help. That starts by getting them appointments with their Primary Care Provider (PCP) at a time that is convenient for them. Staff greets patients upon arrival at the health center in a friendly manner, expedites the registration process and accompanies patients throughout their visits. Patients spend the time needed with their PCPs to discuss their health goals. Patients leave the health center thoroughly understanding their conditions and the plans of action they helped formulate.

The medical home model supports fundamental changes in primary care service delivery, including integrating primary care and behavioral health and payment reforms, with the goal of improving health care quality.

## **Services Provided**

Brockton Neighborhood Health Center provided 160,520 patient visits in FY14 and is continuing to grow rapidly in FY15. BNHC's programs are targeted to low-income and marginalized populations in Brockton and surrounding communities that would otherwise not have access to primary and specialized healthcare. BNHC offers health services regardless of patients' ability to pay. BNHC's programs include:

### ***Medical, Dental and Mental Health Services***

Medical programs include: primary, preventive and urgent health; as well as vision, dental and mental health services for pediatric, adult and obstetrical patients; specialties in gynecology, neurology, nephrology services, radiology, gastroenterology and ophthalmology; nutrition consultations; a prescription discount program; on-site interpreters in Cape Verdean Creole, Haitian Creole, Spanish, French, Portuguese and East Asian languages; free transportation; assistance with enrollment in various insurance programs, extensive social services and case management support.

### ***HIV Clinic***

BNHC operates a federally and state funded HIV clinic offering medical visits; medical case management; mental health counseling; assistance with enrollment into various insurance and assistance programs; health education; medication management/adherence support; nutrition information; peer support services; free prescriptions; on-site interpreters in Cape Verdean Creole, Haitian Creole, Spanish, French, Portuguese and East Asian languages; free medical transportation; home visits for medical case management, peer support, and adherence support; and extensive social services and case management support in partnership with Brockton Area Multi Services, Inc.

### ***Teen Programs***

BNHC operates a weekly teen group that addresses health issues facing teens in a safe, confidential environment. *United Voices* is a grant funded educational/ psychosocial youth program serving low-income teens ages 13-17 in the Brockton area. The teens meet as a group and focus on health and social issues such as: healthy relationships, violence prevention, bullying, diversity, alcohol and drugs, smoking cessation, teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, self-care, community service and academic and professional development. The group's purpose is to educate and support teens in positive health practices and for them to become peer leaders in the community. The format of the meetings includes guest speakers and discussion groups on the above health topics as well as others as they arise. Their mantra is "if you are not part of the solution then you are part of the problem." *United Voices* is committed to being part of the solution.

## **Organizational Structure**

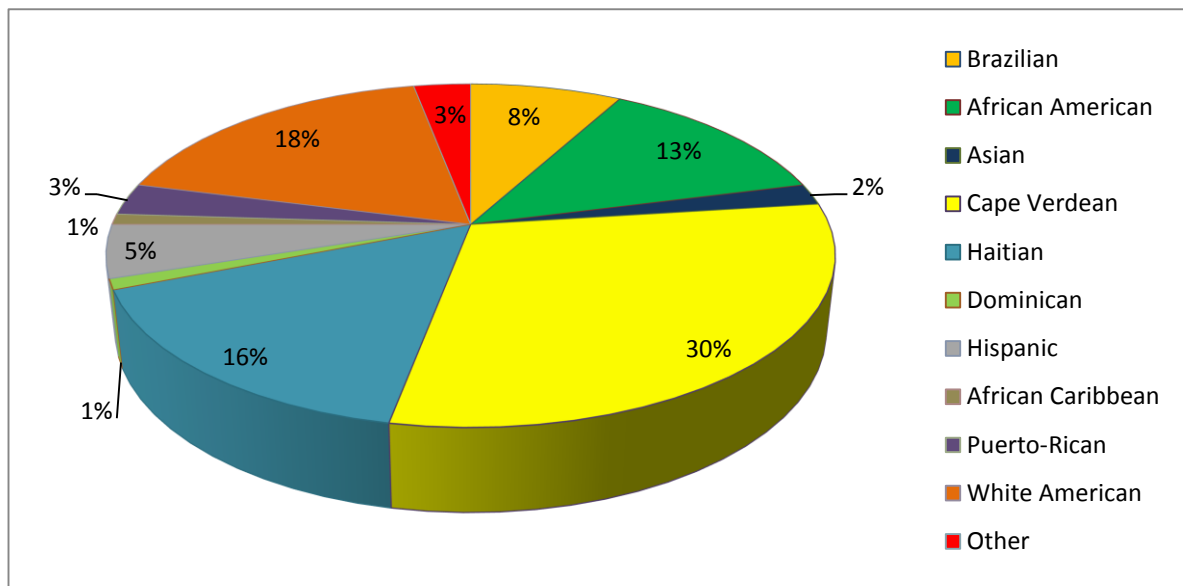
A consumer-majority Board of 17 Trustees governs BNHC. The Board meets monthly. A strong committee structure allows the Board to effectively oversee major health center functions including patient care, finance, and Board development.

BNHC currently employs 423 individuals. BNHC places a high priority on hiring staff that reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of patients. As a result of this commitment, BNHC's workforce is extremely diverse, with almost 80% of its staff representing ethnic and linguistic minorities.

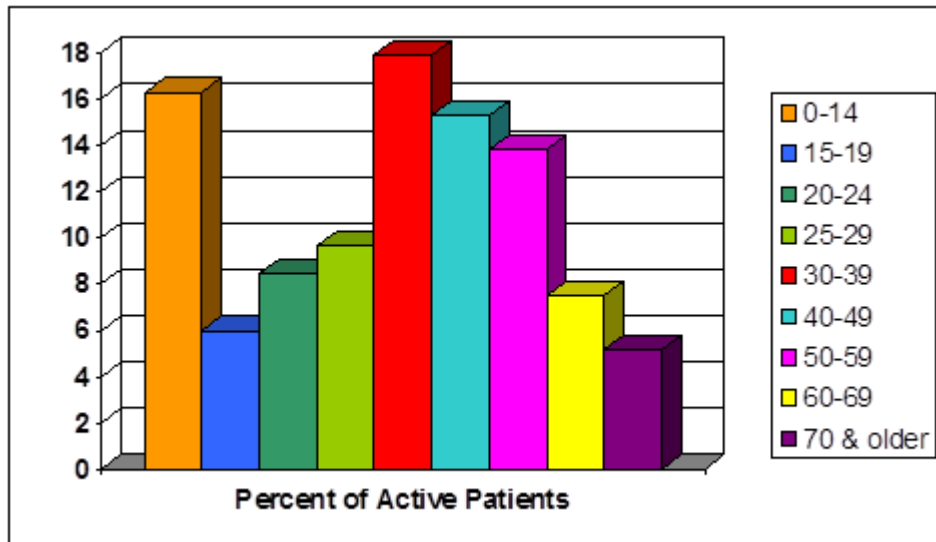
BNHC makes extensive use of student interns. Social services students from a variety of colleges assist with providing direct services to uninsured patients, as it is nearly impossible to refer uninsured patients to local mental health providers, particularly if the patient does not speak English. Medical, nurse practitioner, dentist, dental assistant, RN, LPN, medical assistant and phlebotomy students routinely rotate through BNHC from a variety of schools. High school students work in clerical areas every summer and lead teen discussion groups throughout the year.

## Our Constituents

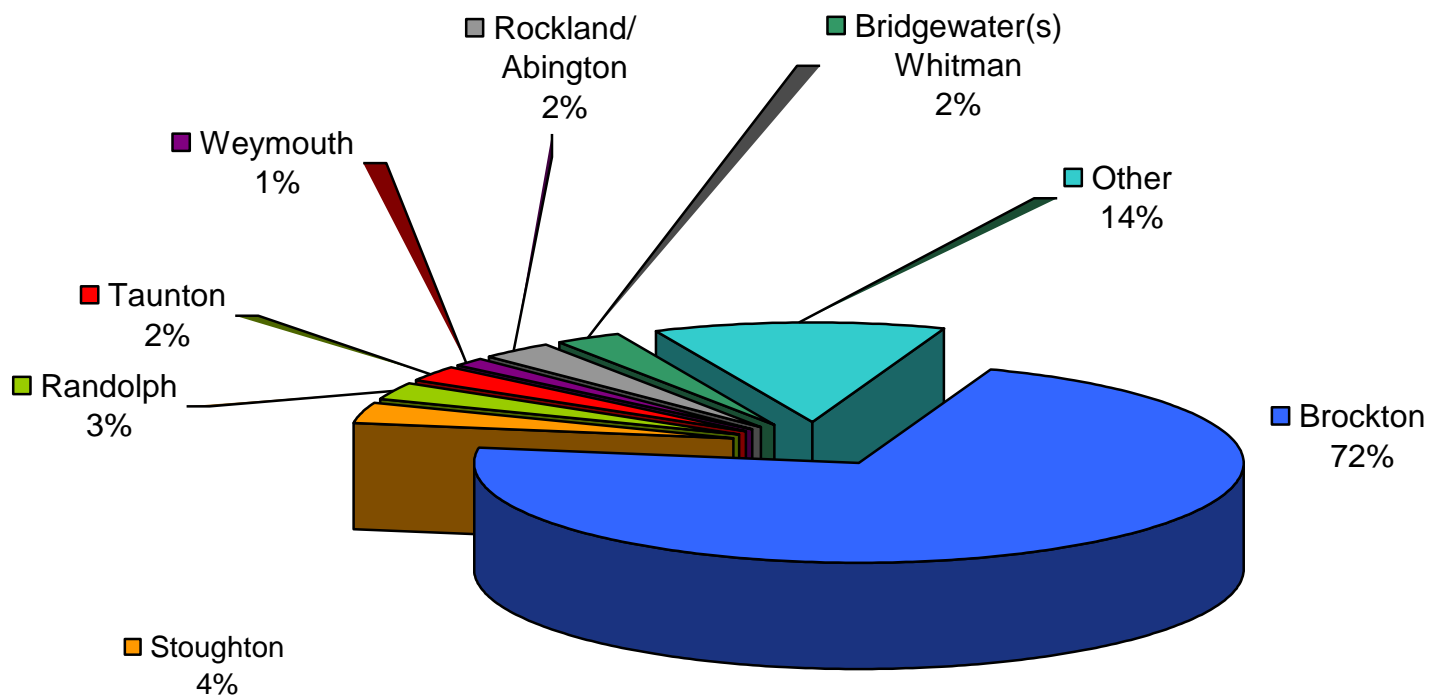
Of BNHC's 27,589 active patients, a full 42% percent would be better served in their native languages, leaving them few options regarding access to health care. Approximately 82 % of patients are from minority populations. 30% of active patients are Cape Verdean, 9% are Latino, 15% are Haitian, 2% are Asian, 2% are African Caribbean, 13% are African American, 8% are Brazilian and 3% other. 31% of patients are indigent uninsured, 39% are insured through MassHealth (Medicaid), 16% through other public insurance, 5% through private insurance and 9% are insured through Medicare.



Over 31% of BNHC’s active patients are under age 25. Patient age distribution is as follows:



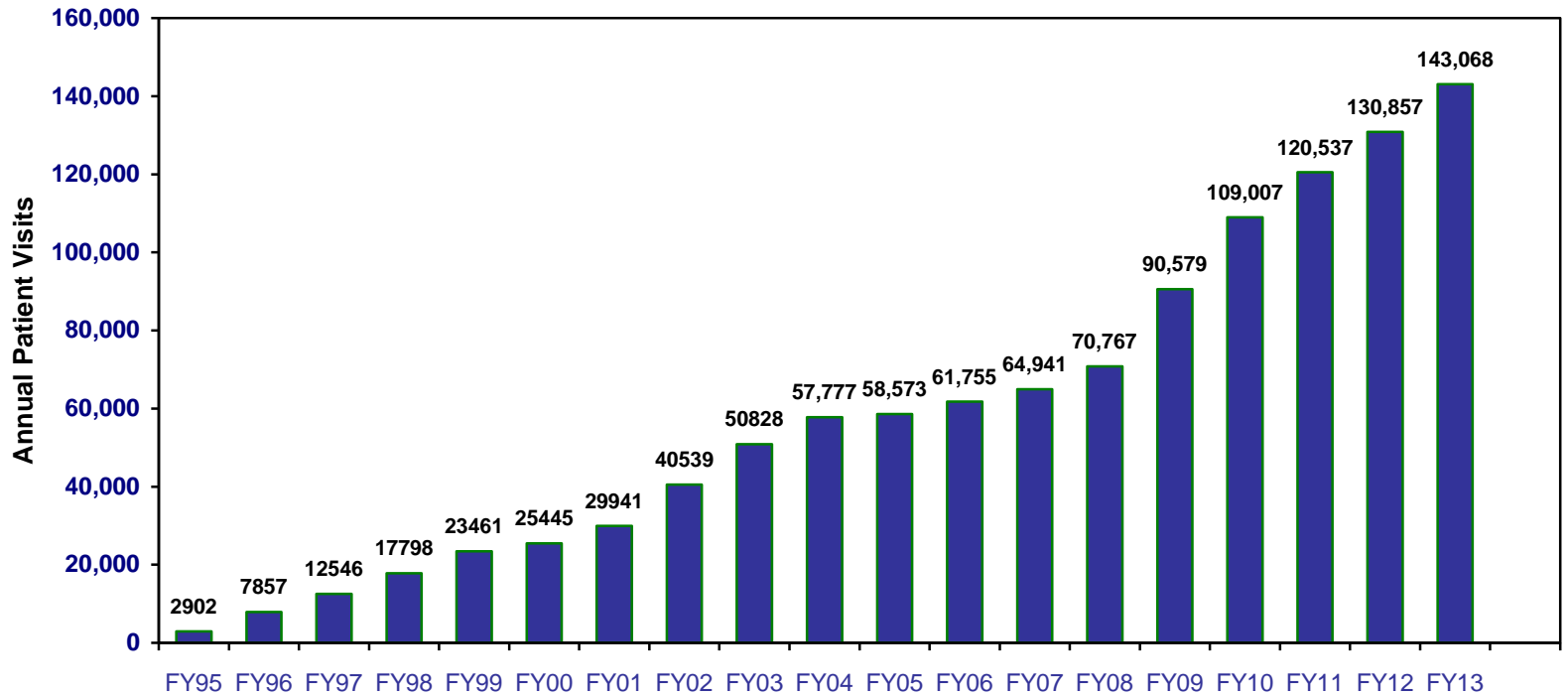
The vast majority (72%) of BNHC’s patients reside in Brockton, with an additional 6% living in Stoughton and Taunton. Another combined 8% reside in Randolph, Rockland, Abington, Weymouth and Bridgewater(s)/Whitman. 74% of patients are living in poverty, and an additional 17% have household income levels below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (\$47,100) for a family of four in 2013). 58% of BNHC’s patients are female.



## Statement of Need

BNHC is the only community health center in Brockton, a city of almost 94,000 residents. It is unique for its commitment to removing barriers to care for the underserved. In particular, the health center has a highly developed support system to remove financial, linguistic and cultural barriers to care for indigent residents of Brockton and surrounding communities.

As previously outlined, the center currently serves 27,589 patients and provided 160,520 patient visits in FY14—another strong testament to the great need for accessible health care in the community. However, these numbers represent just a small percentage of the total population lacking access to health care in the greater Brockton area.



## Economic Impact of Brockton Neighborhood Health Center

The purpose of a community health center is to improve basic healthcare by offering primary, preventive, dental and eye care, as well as mental health, substance abuse and other community-based services to *all* members of a community, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay. In Massachusetts, community health centers represent the largest primary care network in the state, serving about 30% of state residents. However, the overall benefits extend beyond the fact that an improved quality of healthcare can reduce costs, particularly costs due to overuse and misuse of services. More than just reducing costs for medical care of underserved populations, community health centers are important to community economic development.

The Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, the membership association for Massachusetts’ 50 community health center organizations and recognized by the federal Bureau of Primary Health Care as

the state's Primary Care Association, offers the following information in support of cost-effective care through community health centers:

- National studies indicate that every dollar invested in community health centers provides an average savings of *three dollars* to the overall health care system.
- Comprehensive case management, 340b (“best price”) pharmacy programs and aggressive chronic disease management—all of which are in practice at Brockton Neighborhood Health Center—help minimize ER visits and preventable hospitalizations among low-income patients.
- Based on a recent study by the health center-based HMO Neighborhood Health Plan (NHP), patients served by community health centers had fewer hospital admissions, hospital days and emergency room visits than did NHP patients who received their health care from hospital-based primary care sites.
- Employing nearly 11,000 individuals in Massachusetts, health centers also offer critical entry-level jobs and training and career building opportunities right in the communities where they reside. When looking at their overall economic impact on the state's economy, Massachusetts community health centers stimulated \$1.8 billion in total output, generated \$1.2 billion in household income and supported more than 16,000 jobs in 2010.
- Health centers are often the economic engines in low-income communities are frequently the largest employer and provide much of the business traffic that occurs in the districts in which they are located.

## **Beyond Health Care**

In addition to providing needed care to the medically underserved, community health centers, specifically, are catalysts for economic and business development, generating jobs, assuring the presence of health professionals and facilities in underserved areas and utilizing local services. Nationally, community health center investment generated \$12.6 billion dollars in revenues in impoverished and underserved communities, according to a 2007 study and has continued to grow over ensuing years. Community health centers have proven to demonstrate cost-effective responsiveness, empower underserved communities, reduce infant mortality rates, lower hospital admission rates and length of hospital stays for patients, reduce avoidable ER visits and lower Medicaid patients' health costs.

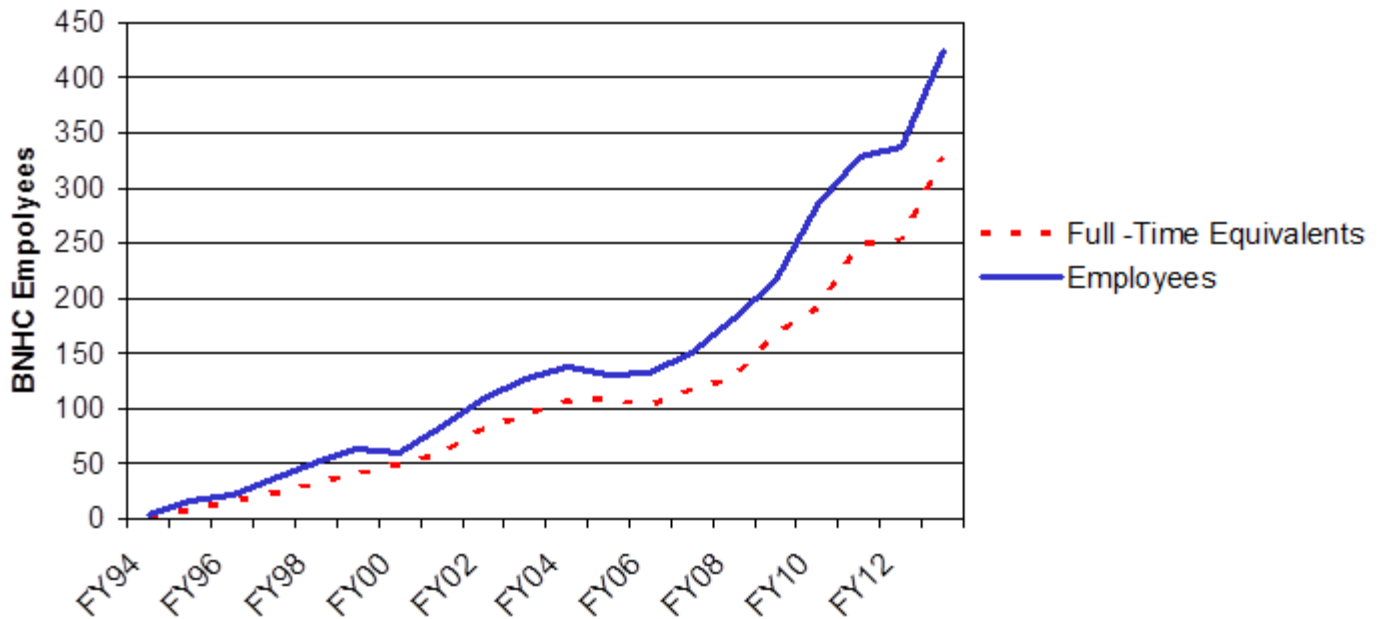
The work of BNHC is intrinsically tied to progress in the Brockton community. In addition to providing essential health care—contributing to a healthier work force—BNHC is an important employer of community residents, providing crucial employment opportunities to low-income Brockton residents as well as a significant purchaser of goods and services. As health care is Brockton's leading industry, BNHC's growth enhances growth within a vital economic sector in our community.



## BNHC as an Employer

Brockton Neighborhood Health Center was incorporated with initial annual federal grant support of \$289,447, and opened its first clinical site in 1994 with five staff. Today, the health center spends \$37.6 million annually on payroll and purchased goods and services. BNHC employs 423 individuals with 307 full-time and 116 part-time, and provides crucial employment opportunities to low-income Brockton residents.

Employing the majority of its staff (59%) directly from Brockton, BNHC provides a source of stable employment for local residents, generating direct economic output, household income and employment to neighborhood residents. The health center places a high priority on hiring staff who reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of patients. The result of this commitment is an extremely diverse BNHC workforce, with 77% of its staff representing ethnic and linguistic minorities



BNHC was recognized by the MetroSouth Chamber of Commerce in November 2007 for its economic impact in Brockton. The health center was recognized by the Brockton 21<sup>st</sup> Century Corporation in 1998 and again in 2004 for its role in revitalizing the downtown Brockton business district.

## BNHC Relationship with Area Medical Service Providers

Brockton Neighborhood Health Center works collaboratively with area hospitals and private physicians to the benefit of both the patients and the service providers, as the role of each complement each other and the health care needs of our community. With 70% of BNHC’s patients qualifying for free care or MassHealth coverage, this patient profile is typically not attractive to private physician practices. With a community health center to serve this demographic, private physicians and dental care providers can build their practices with patients who can afford private health insurance.

Area hospitals benefit significantly from referrals from the health center. BNHC cares for patient needs that do not necessitate hospital services but might otherwise become a burden to the area hospitals if services from a community health center were not available.

### Collaborative Partners

BNHC has an extensive and well-developed collaboration network and is viewed in the community as an agency that works to coordinate services for its clients to eliminate duplication and fragmentation in services. Following are a few key examples of BNHC collaborations, all of which are designed to increase access to health care to underserved populations in the most fiscally and medically responsible manner:

<b>BNHC Partner</b>	<b>Collaboration Accomplishments</b>
Brockton Coalition for the Homeless	Established a medical satellite in MainSpring House, Brockton’s homeless shelter
WIC	Allows families seeking WIC benefits to access health care services at the same time
Brockton Area Multi Services, Inc.	Brings comprehensive medical, dental and social services to people living with HIV/AIDS
Project Bread	Funds emergency food monies to elders and families
Eaton Apothecary	Eaton provides discounted medications to BNHC patients and is located within the health center building
Good Samaritan Medical Center	Good Sam provides X-ray services on site for all patients
Founding organization and current chair of the Brockton Area Community Health Network Area (CHNA)	A coalition working to address community health issues in the greater Brockton area
Reach Out and Read	Early literacy promotion linking PCPs and children 6 months to 5 years of age
Boston Medical Center (BMC) Grow Clinic	BMC and BNHC work with area children who fail to thrive
Brockton Public Schools & Cardinal Spellman High School	BNHC provides pediatric supervision to the school nurses
Brockton High School	BNHC works with the sports department’s physical program
AmeriCorps and the Mass League of Community Health Centers	AmeriCorps health care members placed at BNHC to expand services to the community
Langwater Farm, North Easton, MA	Our shares allow us to offer fresh vegetables to our vibrant lifestyle patients
Messiah Baptist Church, Brockton, MA	Their premises are available to us for cooking classes and meetings with our vibrant lifestyle patients.