

Health Center Stories:

Codman Square Health Center, MA

This summary describes how Codman Square Health Center (CSHC) planned and financed its expansion project, highlighting the capital project structure, financing and impact. Located in Dorchester, Massachusetts, the health center built a 36,500 square foot “green” LEED gold certified addition to its existing site at 637 Washington Street. The goals of the project were to:

- Improve health center capacity and patient flow resulting in increased access to primary care and preventive health service, and improved health outcomes for a greater number of indigent uninsured patients in the service areas.
- Improve the welfare of low-income individuals in Dorchester and the surrounding area by providing a source of permanent jobs that offer career advancement opportunities.
- Improve the overall efficiency and cost-effectiveness of operations.
- Improve CSHC’s long-term financial stability through increased patient revenues.
- Add vital specialty services not currently available for CSHC patients.

The expansion increased CSHC’s medical capacity, but it also allowed the health center to benefit the local economy by creating new clinical and administrative jobs, most for local, low-income individuals. Codman Square broke ground on the project in October, 2011 and construction is expected to be completed in the fall of 2012.

About Codman Square Health Center

Operating since 1979, CSHC is a community-based, outpatient health care and multi-service center that serves Dorchester, Boston’s largest and poorest neighborhood. Dorchester is a densely-populated urban center with a low-income population (46.6% is below 200% of the federal poverty level compared to the national and state averages of 30.5% and 25.9% respectively). CSHC serves over 22,000 patients and records over 100,000 clinical visits each year (2011). 87% of CSHC’s patients live below 200% of the federal poverty level.

CSHC believes a true “culture of health” is achieved through the health of the whole person and the whole community. Its mantra is: while disease is a lack of health, health is not simply a lack of disease. Today, the health center is home to a staff of 280 multi-lingual and multi-cultural expert clinicians, medical staff and employees, most of who reside in the neighborhoods near Codman Square. CSHC provides comprehensive services including primary care, urgent care, dental care, eye care, behavioral health, public health, fiscal health, fitness/wellness programming and youth programming. CSHC has been recognized by the White House Office of Social Innovation as a potential model to replicate in the over 1200 community health centers in the U.S. and received Boston’s first Mayoral Prize for Innovation in Primary Care in 2010.

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Community Collaborations

Codman Square Health Center strives to solve the problems of its service area through innovative partnerships with organizations which share its mission: to serve as a resource for improving the physical, mental and social well-being of the community. One such collaboration is DotWell, formed in 1998 with Dorchester House Multi-Service Center to offer an array of services to area residents, including public health education, new parent support groups, nutrition classes, computer training and personal finance coaching. Similarly, Codman partnered with Healthworks Community Fitness, a nonprofit fitness center that provides classes and youth programming at subsidized and sliding-scale rates.

CSHC's approach is unique in that it's also an educational institution. Codman Academy, a City of Boston charter school and the only school within a health facility building in the United States, opened its doors in 2001. An expeditionary school, Codman Academy emphasizes learning outside of the classroom and has developed partnerships with local organizations such as the Huntington Theatre.

In September 2010, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Public Health recognized Codman Academy as the first and highest scoring school in the state to win the Gold-Level Massachusetts School Wellness Award for innovative programming and partnership with CSHC. All students at Codman Academy complete internships applying math and science to public health issues and careers. 100% of its students have been accepted to college.

With 145 students and 30 staff operating out of 8,000 square feet, the school was forced to use the basement of the Citizens Bank down the street for extra capacity. Since Codman Academy prioritizes its affiliation with CSHC, rather than move to a bigger space it elected to consolidate with the health center to form the Codman Square Health and Education Center.



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The Capital Project: Codman Square Health and Education Center

Like Codman Academy, Codman Square Health Center lacked sufficient space to operate efficiently. Constraints included too few exam rooms, overcrowded waiting areas and inefficient patient flow, leading to lower productivity. The health center's wait time for primary care appointments had increased by more than 300% over the past two years, despite extending health center service hours to include evenings, Saturdays and Sunday hours.

The new four-story wing will add 22 exam rooms, 13 health care provider offices, 6 radiology/mammography facilities, and 3 new rooms for group medical visits. When complete, the health center can expand clinical programs and add space for educational and social programs. The project will allow CSHC to serve an additional 5,300 low-income and underserved patients each year and 22,526 patient visits, a 21% increase.

An exterior view of Codman Square Health and Education Center



The expansion will provide Codman Academy with 10 additional classrooms, including 2 science labs and a science/art room, a library, faculty work and storage space, student/alumni meeting space, and an outdoor teaching area. The health center and school will share a black box theatre (Dorchester's first), which will be used by the community for plays, musical performances and lectures. The community will also have access to a dining facility and teaching kitchen, used for a wide variety of adult education classes.

Interior views of an exam room and reception area at Codman Square Health and Education Center



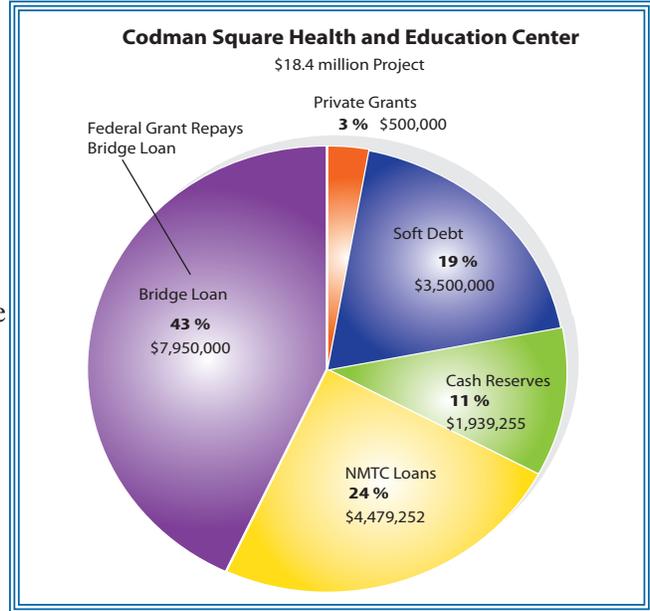
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Project Funding/Financing

CSHC used numerous sources to fund the project in an attempt to minimize its debt. A successful fundraising campaign and \$7.95 million through the Federal Affordable Care Act were key components. A New Markets Tax Credit transaction was structured to complete the funding, adding equity.

The chart to the right shows the sources of funds for the \$18.4 million project:



Impact

CSHC serves as one of Dorchester’s largest employers and has contributed over \$30 million annually to the local economy prior to expanding. The health center continues to experience significant growth, increasing its patient population by 56% and its staff by 14% since 2007. This project is anticipated to create 177 FTEs (construction) and add approximately 28 permanent FTEs with the expansion of services being offered.

The chart below shows the impact of CSHC’s expansion on the community.

	2010 (1 year prior to project start)	2016 expanded operations (5 years after project start)
Number of Patients Served	22,000	27,300
Number of Patient Visits	97,238	144,057
Health Center Revenues	\$19.4 million	\$28.5 million
Construction Jobs	177	
Permanent Employment at Health Center	197	224
Other Community Employment	58	74
Total Economic Impact	\$31.3 million	\$42.9 million

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