



Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Helping neighbors build communities

**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 3, 2015**

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**BROCKTON NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH CENTER AND VICENTE'S TROPICAL
GROCERY CELEBRATE OPENING OF JOINT VENTURE**

*Clinic will provide health care alongside nutritional education via innovative partnership
with adjacent market*

BROCKTON, MA – September 3, 2015 – U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Mayor Bill Carpenter of Brockton today joined the celebration of a pioneering partnership between Brockton Neighborhood Health Center and Vicente's Tropical Grocery to improve health outcomes for the people of Brockton and surrounding communities. The grand opening of the health center and the adjacent supermarket represents a \$22 million investment to help low-income residents improve their health by offering access to healthy food, health care, and nutritional counseling and education—all in one location.

For Brockton, with nearly one in four residents living in poverty, diabetes and obesity rates higher than the state average, and limited health care services, the new health care and healthy food facilities will help meet a deep need. The new site also restores a long-abandoned commercial site at the corner of Pleasant Street and Warren Avenue.

"Today's launch of the partnership between Brockton Neighborhood Health Center and Vicente's Tropical Grocery is terrific news for Greater Brockton," Senator Warren said. "By improving access to quality health care and to healthy food options, this joint effort will help lead to healthier families and a stronger community. I'm very glad that federal funding supported it."

Both the health center and the supermarket are satellites of trusted community institutions in Brockton. The new health center is expected to serve about 6,700 patients each year, with a particular focus on low-income residents. The supermarket serves about 2,500 customers daily.

By providing aligned health care services and support for healthy eating habits in one location, the center and market will make it easier for residents to access these critical services, improve their health, and start to transform their quality of life.

The vision of these two organizations was brought to fruition with complex financing facilitated by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the country's largest community development organization. LISC has 30 urban offices across the country, including in the greater Boston area.

“This is a rare joint venture of a nonprofit and private business that will benefit the community for years to come,” said Michael Rubinger, CEO of LISC. “The partnership is about so much more than sharing a location—it’s about providing critical health services and education about food to people in need in a neighborhood where they struggle to find both. That’s a critical element of our effort to help low-income residents in communities nationwide improve their quality of life.”

Staff at the 13,600 square foot health center will offer integrated nutritional services and programs with Vicente’s, with a particular focus on the needs of low-income residents. For example, patients will be given incentives to join nutritional tours at Vicente’s and participate in cooking demonstrations to learn how to prepare healthier versions of meals they already know and love.

“We know that great healthcare alone is not enough to keep our patients healthy,” said Sue Joss, CEO of the Brockton Neighborhood Health Center. “By combining healthcare services with access to healthy foods, this project recognizes that good nutrition is critical to improving and maintaining good health for the low-income patients we serve.”

LISC, Morgan Stanley, and The Kresge Foundation provided \$8 million for the new health center through their Healthy Futures Fund—the first-of-its kind investment vehicle to expand access to health care and affordable housing for low-income residents and fund critical social services that help link the two in underserved communities. For this health center project, LISC also partnered with the Opportunity Finance Network/Leviticus Fund. Separately, LISC invested \$3.6 million to open Vicente’s in June 2015, alongside the Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation, JPMorgan Chase, The Reinvestment Fund and Boston Community Capital.

Financing for both the grocery store and the health center was supported by New Markets Tax Credits, which stimulate private sector investments in businesses located in low income communities. In addition, financing for Vicente’s was supported by grant funding through the Healthy Food Financing Initiative at the Treasury Department and the Department of Health and Human Services.

“We’ve remained dedicated and passionate about serving our community for the past 20 years,” said Jason Barbosa of Vicente’s Tropical Grocery. “We believe that everyone deserves equal and affordable access to health care and quality food. With the health center, we are making a long-term commitment to the health and well-being of our community.”

LISC has invested in 55 community health centers and 64 grocery stores across the country—all helping meet the needs of disadvantaged residents and raise standards of living in distressed areas.

In Brockton, LISC is working with Vicente’s, Brockton Neighborhood Health Center, and other partners to create educational programs that directly address the connection between healthy eating and healthy living—tackling diabetes, obesity, and other chronic health conditions that are often pervasive in disadvantaged communities. As part of the effort, they will reach out to nearby affordable housing residents, teaching how to select and prepare nutritious food for people who need help determining how to eat well—within their means.

About the Local Initiatives Support Corporation

LISC combines corporate, government and philanthropic resources to help nonprofit community development corporations revitalize distressed neighborhoods. Since 1980, LISC has invested \$14.7 billion to build or rehab 329,400 affordable homes and apartments and develop 53 million square feet of retail, community and educational space. For more information, visit www.lisc.org.

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