

## Partnership Promotes Mental Health Care

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Tulane University is partnering to increase access to mental healthcare services, a critical issue in post-Katrina New Orleans where an estimated one in three people has battled symptoms of depression or post-traumatic stress disorder in the four years since the storm. Dr. Ben Springgate of Tulane is leading the effort through REACH NOLA.



Dr. Ben Springgate wants to improve access to mental health care in New Orleans. Shown outside the free Common Ground Health Clinic that opened after Hurricane Katrina, he works for the Tulane School of Medicine and is president of REACH NOLA. (Photo by Dr. Kenneth B. Wells)

[REACH NOLA](#), a nonprofit partnership comprised of local health and social service agencies and academic partners including Tulane University and the RAND Corp., on Thursday (Aug. 27) brought together mental-health care providers and community organizations from across the region to highlight successful programs that are improving access to mental health care for those most in need.

A forum called "Partnerships for Mental Health" on Thursday showcased local

community-academic partnerships that are helping adults and children across the city.

It was an opportunity to share progress that has been made in bringing higher quality and more accessible mental health care to the community in the aftermath of the Katrina and Rita disasters, says Dr. Benjamin Springgate, REACH NOLA president and co-chair and director of health for the RAND Gulf States Policy Institute.

Springgate also is executive director of community health innovation and research for the Tulane Office of [Community Affairs and Health Policy](#) in the Tulane School of Medicine.

The REACH NOLA Mental Health Infrastructure and Training Project offers free training to mental health care providers to help people recover faster from ongoing issues and hosts programs on medication management for physicians treating depression.

"We also provide training for case managers and outreach workers about engaging their clients about the very difficult topic of mental health and helping to bring them into care," Springgate says.

REACH NOLA is creating a network of community service agencies that treat and counsel patients to better screen for depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.