

## Better Health Care After Katrina

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Dr. Karen DeSalvo of Tulane was among the Louisiana representatives who traveled to Washington, D.C., to receive the 2010 Health Quality Award from the National Committee for Quality Assurance, honoring a coalition that created a community-based healthcare network.

In a ceremony on March 23, the national award was given to the Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum, the Louisiana Public Health Institute and a coalition of Greater New Orleans community health organizations.

"The opportunity to develop a health system remarkable for its innovation and efficiency has captured our imaginations not only in hurricane-impacted areas, but across all corners of the state," said DeSalvo, president-elect of the Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum. DeSalvo accepted the award on behalf of the Quality Forum.

DeSalvo is the C. Thorpe Ray Chair in Internal Medicine and vice dean for [community affairs and healthcare policy](#) for the Tulane University School of Medicine.

The Louisiana organizations were recognized for their collaboration after Hurricane Katrina to develop and implement a community-based healthcare network focused on primary care and integrated behavioral health in New Orleans.

"After Hurricane Katrina, these organizations had the vision to build a healthcare system that was better than what existed before the storm," said Margaret E. O'Kane, president of the National Committee for Quality Assurance. "They brought high-quality care to the residents of New Orleans. Their success is an important and inspiring model for the rest of the country of what community-based healthcare can do."

The coalition, comprising 25 Greater New Orleans community health organizations, worked to open 93 healthcare-delivery sites in some of the city's most disadvantaged and storm-devastated areas. It provides high-quality primary and

behavioral health care at the community level to decrease reliance on emergency rooms in the four-parish Greater New Orleans area (Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes).