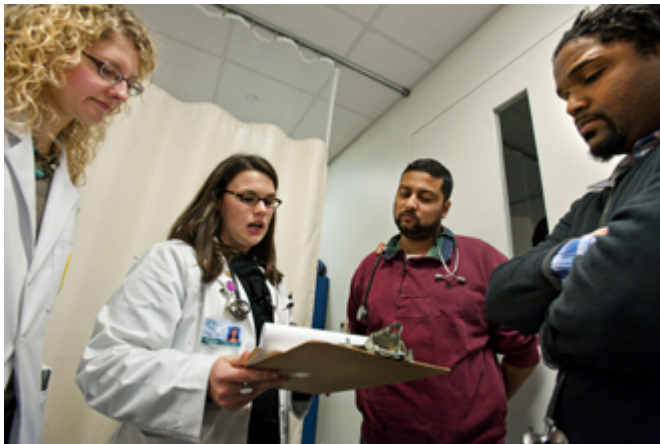


Clinic treats patients and educates students

December 12, 2011 2:15 AM Kirby Messinger
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At the Tulane Bridge House Clinic, students have created an operation that is completely their own. Every Wednesday night, Tulane medical students organize a volunteer clinic that provides health care for residents of Bridge House, a treatment center for men with long-term substance abuse problems.



Working together at Bridge House are, from left, medical students Rachel Regn, Elizabeth Cole and Shubho Sarkar, with Dr. Azikiwe Lombard, assistant clinical professor of family and community medicine. (Photos by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Working in teams, first- and second-year students meet with patients, give physicals and take patients' medical history. Then they confer with third- and fourth-year students who act as mentors. The teams evaluate patients and present their findings to an attending physician who is able to write prescriptions and dispense medicine.



Bridge House Clinic fosters a team environment. Medical students (foreground, from left) Benjamin Wheatley, Jennifer Farrell and Jae Shin discuss a patient's care.

“It's a great challenge and a great opportunity to put our minds together and figure out how we can help our patients,” says Caroline Walker, a second-year Bridge House clinic coordinator.

Walker says that students relish the autonomy of the clinic. They are able to develop a plan, have it approved by a faculty member, and start implementing their ideas on the spot.

Dr. Arthur T. Fort IV, assistant professor of [family and community medicine](#), says that students love the experience because they get to do something meaningful for the community while still learning valuable tools.

Shubho Sarkar has been involved with the Bridge House clinic for all four years of medical school and feels that the experience will prepare him for residency training next year.

“It's a win-win situation because the residents of Bridge House get the care they deserve, and we get this wonderful learning environment,” says Sarkar.

Bridge House patients appreciate the care and attention they receive at the clinic, but students are just as grateful. “Everything I put into this, I get 10 times more out of it,” says Walker.

In addition to the Bridge House clinic, there are a variety of [community service opportunities](#) for medical students at Tulane.