

Med students organize council to improve care

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Delivering quality care to every patient has long been a motto of the Tulane School of Medicine, but medical students have taken that motto a step further by organizing an Interclinic Council to foster open dialogue on best practices for student-led clinics.



Students from four student-led community health clinics share resources to become better caregivers. Here, students conduct a free clinic at the Ozanam Inn homeless shelter. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Prior to founding the Interclinic Council in January 2011, student leaders of four community health clinics ? Ozanam Inn Weekend Clinic, [Bridge House Clinic](#), Fleur de Vie-NOLA East and Covenant House ? lacked a network for sharing resources and answers to common problems.

“It turned out we were all trying to reinvent the wheel. We thought it would be better to join forces and work toward the common goal of providing educational

experiences for students while administering excellent healthcare services to underserved populations in New Orleans,” says Meghan Athoff, a second-year medical student.

As a result, the Interclinic Council has been able to develop innovative programming and troubleshoot issues such as exam efficiency and physician coordination. The council is also collecting data about the varying patient populations and the care they are receiving.

Meghan Garstka, a third-year medical student, says that working collaboratively has improved the quality of patient care at all of the clinics. Students are able to develop new plans and implement them across the board. Council meetings are held once a month and all Tulane medical students are welcome. Faculty members often attend to add their perspective to the discussions.

The council is embarking on fundraising efforts to aid educational program development for first- and second-year students and funding needs within the various clinics.

“We are planning a [fundraiser](#) on May 2 and the proceeds will help us continue to improve the quality of services and educational opportunities. We are proud that our programs are unique among medical schools in the nation,” says Garstka.