

New initiative to bridge gap between doctors, food and health care

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The Tulane University School of Medicine and Johnson & Wales University announced a groundbreaking, long-term collaboration that unites doctors and chefs in improving the nation's health through the teaching of culinary medicine.



Kerri Dotson, right, an intern with Johnson & Wales University, coaches Janice Ford in healthy cooking techniques at the [Brinton Family Health and Healing Center](#), as part of the new culinary medicine collaboration with Tulane University. (Photo by Tracie Morris Schaeffer)

For the first time, a medical school and a major culinary institution plan to implement a fully integrated, comprehensive joint curriculum for doctors, medical students, chefs and the community focused on the significant role that food choices and nutrition play in preventing and managing obesity and associated diseases in America.

“This is an entirely new approach in the training of both physicians and chefs,” said Dr. Benjamin Sachs, senior vice president and dean of the [Tulane School of Medicine](#)

. “Our goal is to change the way health practitioners think about food and the practice of medicine. With statistics showing that 65 percent of Americans are overweight and a third are obese, it's not enough for doctors to know just the basics of nutrition. They must also learn to translate the science into practical lessons that empower their patients to lead healthier lives.”

The initial program, which includes culinary classes for medical students, will be based at Tulane University, with the collaboration's long-term goal to establish others first at [Johnson & Wales University's](#) flagship campus in Providence, R.I., and in the future at its other campuses. The plan includes seminars, internships, faculty training, curricular offerings, community outreach, research and, ultimately, the development of a master's degree in culinary nutrition at JWU and a rotation in culinary nutrition for Tulane medical students.

“Elevating the overall role of nutrition, including the preparation of nutritious meals, is vital in disease management and prevention,” said Karl Guggenmos, university dean of culinary education, Johnson & Wales University. “Our collaboration with Tulane will address many aspects of culinary medicine, including mitigating the risks of food allergies and preparing culturally sensitive nutritious meals, with the long-term goal of improving public health.”