[Soundcheck: Concert fundraiser blends music, HIV testing](#)

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kbrannon@tulane.edu

Dr. MarkAlain Déry, medical director of the Tulane University T-Cell Clinic, is on a mission to make it cool to get an HIV test. Or at least no big deal.

Dr. MarkAlain Déry, an assistant professor of clinical medicine at Tulane, is mixing HIV awareness and music as host of a concert on Nov. 30. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

For the past four years, [Déry](#) has organized the HIV Awareness Music Project (HAMP), a concert in the French Quarter that brings local musicians together to promote HIV education, awareness and empowerment.

The [event](#), scheduled for 9 p.m. on Friday (Nov. 30) at One-Eyed Jacks, features local music and entertainers demonstrating how simple it is to get tested for HIV. All it takes is a mouth swab and results are ready in 20 minutes.

"The HIV Awareness Music Project is my way of mixing two things that I love. I am very passionate about HIV awareness and music. My goal is to get the message to young people that they need to get tested for HIV and for them to see how easy it is

to be tested," says Déry, whose band will also perform at the concert.

"If they can see someone like a musician that they admire and respect getting tested for HIV then I think that is a very powerful message that resonates and inspires people to get tested."

The message is particularly urgent in Louisiana. New Orleans and Baton Rouge consistently rank among the top 10 cities in the country with the highest numbers of new cases of HIV and AIDS. Youth are particularly at risk: a quarter of all new HIV infections in the United States occur in those ages 13 to 24, according the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Most don't know they are infected, Déry says.

HAMP also will raise money for the [Tulane T-Cell Clinic](), a weekly clinic within the Ruth U. Fertel/Tulane Community Health Center that provides care for HIV-positive patients whether they have insurance or not.