

Tulane University Health Clinic Awarded Funding for HIV Care

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Tulane University School of Medicine is now providing HIV/AIDS care within the Tulane Community Health Center at Covenant House.

Dr. Mark Alain D'Arcy, an instructor of clinical medicine, opened the new clinic in early April to provide ongoing care to patients regardless of their insurance status. Funding is provided through a Ryan White grant from the city of New Orleans Office of Health Policy. "We are very excited about this as it will allow us to become more involved in the community management of HIV, offer HIV clinical trials to the community, and provide more learning opportunities for students," says Dr. David Mushatt, chief of Tulane Adult Infectious Diseases Section.

New Orleans ranks third in the nation for AIDS case among metropolitan areas, according to 2008 figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

D'Arcy and students will staff the clinic from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Thursdays and noon to 4 p.m. on Fridays. Patients can call 504-988-3343 for more information or to make an appointment.

HIV has become a manageable condition due to tremendous treatment advances. But unlike other chronic diseases, it still carries a social stigma that makes it harder for some to seek care. One of D'Arcy's goals is to normalize HIV treatment. "This is part of an overall trend to destigmatize HIV by placing it in ordinary health clinic," he says.

The clinic is one of several HIV projects for D'Arcy, a passionate advocate in the fight against AIDS. Last year, he founded the New Orleans Society for Infectious Disease Awareness to raise local awareness about HIV. He also organizes the HIV Awareness Music Project, an annual music festival that promotes HIV education and

empowerment. D'Amory previously served as medical director for the community-based HIV clinic NR PEACE.