

IMPROVING ACCESS to HEALTHCARE in NEW ORLEANS

An up-to-date guide of free or low-cost clinics and medication assistance.

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What is www.nolafreehealthcare.com and why did it develop?

After Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans' safety net, Charity Hospital, was closed. Numerous free or low-cost clinics opened around town. Yet homeless individuals still expressed a need for more free clinics, as they were unaware of the resources that already existed. In August 2007 the resources that were available were out-dated, inaccurate, and lacked information regarding cost of medical care. Upon verifying information, print guides were assembled and thousands of copies were dispersed to homeless individuals. A website, with both online and print guides, was created to address the difficult task of redistribution following guide updates. The master list is always available online, thus ensuring accurate, up-to-date information for health workers and community members. Additionally, the website has a \$4 drug checker, links to other useful resources, and is accessible in Spanish and Portuguese.

When and why is a healthcare guide necessary in a city?

A healthcare guide is necessary whenever resources are available, but people do not know about them. Post-Katrina New Orleans was unique because Charity Hospital, the hospital that treated the indigent, was closed. Simultaneously, many free or low-cost clinics erupted around town, yet people had no idea these clinics existed. The homeless were especially disadvantaged, as they had no way of discovering where they could go for medical care. For these individuals, having a single resource available that contains relevant, updated information can make the difference between going to the ER or utilizing the available resources. For this reason, the Tulane Internal Medicine Department has now incorporated the guide into the curriculum of their Residency program; the Intern Survival Guide written by Dr. Jeffrey Wiese now includes information regarding the healthcare guide.

What is needed in a healthcare guide to ensure that it is utilized by the impoverished?

The guide must be accurate and up-to-date. When people without resources rely on information, which is wrong or has changed, they may not trust your resource in the future. Because information may change, the guide must have the date it was last updated, must have an e-mail address for corrections, and must be updated in real time as new information becomes available. Although the guide should be maintained online, a print-friendly version should be made available with the assumption that people will not further research information about the clinics from other websites.

There are five essential components that make up a healthcare guide: hours, location, phone number, a detailed description of the clinic, and cost. People need to know both the days and hours of operation, the name of the clinic and where to go, and how to contact the clinic should they need an appointment. The above three components are in most every guide available. The detailed clinic description adds the utility to the guide. Many free or low cost clinics offer limited services. Some clinics only do screenings, others only do physical exams and write prescriptions, and some have the capability to do lab work. In addition to the services offered, the list should specify any limitations the clinic has. If the clinic only sees pediatric patients, it should specify the ages of patients that will be seen. If the clinic only sees homeless patients or only takes appointments, it should specify that as well. The last essential component of a guide is cost of services. In order for a guide to be useful for homeless individuals, they need to know exactly how much money, if any, they are expected to pay. If the clinic is free, the guide should explicitly say so. A good rule of thumb when creating a guide for the homeless is to only include clinics that will see patients regardless of their ability to pay.

Even if you have a healthcare guide available, how do you get the information to homeless individuals?

Given that many homeless individuals do not have access to Internet, the two major target populations for the healthcare guides are agencies that serve the homeless and healthcare providers. If people at the local food bank, homeless shelters, or various churches know about your resource, they can print up the guide and distribute it to those in need. Additionally, every clinic on the resource guide needs to know about this guide. This will allow them to refer patients to other clinics if the patient needs follow up or additional care. Many homeless men and women utilize the ER as their primary care. The ER can give patients a guide upon discharge to help inform them of the resources available. The key with the guide is that it is maintained online. If individuals know to go to a website, which should be easy to remember, then they will be able to provide homeless individuals with accurate information.

How do physicians improve the likelihood that their prescriptions will be filled?

If a patient will not fill a prescription due to cost, the doctor might as well not have written the prescription. Although many prescriptions are very expensive for patients without insurance, there are hundreds of prescriptions available at stores such as Walmart and Target for those with and without insurance for \$4 per 30 day supply. The doctor will improve the likelihood that their prescriptions are filled by utilizing the \$4 formulary, and educating the patient about this service. To improve the likelihood that prescriptions will be filled, a drug checker is present at www.nolafreehealthcare.com. This drug checker is a customized Google search box that scans Walmart's \$4 formulary and quickly advises the doctor if a drug is on the list. The doctor must simply type in the generic name of the drug and the drug checker will register if Walmart has it. For example, if the doctor searches for "Coreg," nothing will appear. However, if the doctor types in "Carvedilol" then the search box will have a link present to the Walmart guide. This means that it is covered. This rapid step allows ease in determining if prescriptions are filled on the \$4 plan.

FREE HEALTHCARE GUIDE from Tulane Physicians for Social Responsibility available at WWW.NOLAFREEHEALTHCARE.COM

The clinics listed below are the free clinics in town. Read the descriptions of each to see about any limitations.

Medication Information: \$4 for a 30 Day Supply

- Wal-Mart, Winn-Dixie, and Target offer over 300 generic drugs for \$4 per 30 day supply even if you do not have any medical insurance.
- Please ask your doctor if the prescription is available through the Wal-Mart, Winn Dixie or Target \$4 Prescription Program.
- If your prescription is for a name-brand medication, ask your doctor if a generic alternative would work.
- Please visit <http://www.nolafreehealthcare.com> for a quick and simple search to see if your prescription is covered by any of the \$4 Prescription Programs.
- If you are homeless, the Ozanam Inn (843 Camp) will give you a voucher for most prescriptions so that you do not have to pay.

NAME	ADDRESS	HOURS	PHONE	DESCRIPTION
Tulane University Community Health Center's: • Covenant House • New Orleans East	Covenant House 611 N. Rampart Street New Orleans East 4626 Alcee Fortier Blvd. Suite D	Covenant House Mon & Thurs: 8am - 7pm. Tues, Wed & Fri: 8 am - 5 pm New Orleans East 8:30 am - 4:00 pm	Covenant House 504-988-3000 New Orleans East 504-255-8665	\$10 for urgent care, \$5 for primary care, will not turn patients away based on ability to pay * All medical services are by appointment only. If you have urgent needs, please call or walk-in to make an urgent care appointment for the same or the next day * each patient can be assigned a primary physician to lead their medical home team * on-site mental health counseling * behavioral health services * geriatrics care * reproductive health services This is a low/no cost primary care clinic for clients under the age of 24. Appointments are encouraged but walk-ins are welcome. * The Pediatric Clinic provides primary care, urgent care and psychiatric services for infants, children and adolescents until age 12. * The Teen Clinic provides primary care and urgent care for adolescents and young adults until age 24. * The Reproductive Health Clinic is for young women and men until age 24 specifically for STD screening and treatment and family planning services.
Tulane Drop-In Clinic @ Covenant House: • Pediatric Clinic • Teen Clinic • Reproductive Health Clinic	Covenant House 611 N. Rampart St.	Pediatric Clinic Mon - Fri: 9 am - 12 pm Teen Clinic Mon - Fri: 1 pm - 5 pm Reproductive Health Clinic Mon & Wed: 5 - 9 pm Sat: 9 am - 1 pm	504-584-1112	Free mental health care, behavioral health care and supportive services for homeless youth and youth at-risk for homelessness * Services include but are not limited to group activities, case management, job search assistance, substance abuse services and psychiatric services.
Tulane Drop-In Center	1428 N. Rampart St.	Mon: 9:30 am - 11 am & 2 pm - 6 pm Tues: 5 pm - 7 pm Wed: 9:30 am - 12 pm Thurs & Fri: 9:30 am - 1 pm	504-948-6701	This is a free clinic run by Tulane Medical Students. Every patient is seen by medical students and then by the doctor * Please call to make an appointment * Mental Health Visits * Social Workers Available * Health Education * Prescriptions * Servicios en Español
Fleur de Vie Clinic at Covenant House	611 N. Rampart St.	2009 Dates: 8-8, 8-22, 9-12, 9-26, 10-10, 10-24, 11-14, 12-12. 2010 Dates: 1-9, 1-23, 2-27, 3-13, 3-27, 4-10, 4-24, 5-8, 5-22, 6-12, 7-24. 9am - 2pm (last patient seen at 1pm)	504-988-3000	