

Miguel Alonso of New Orleans Children's Health Project named Angel Award winner

Carolyn Scofield
scofield@tulane.edu
5048814542

This video from the Blue Cross Foundation introduces you to Miguel Alonso and the New Orleans Children's Health Project.

Miguel Alonso spent years practicing medicine in Cuba and Venezuela but gave up a career as a physician to bring his family to the United States so they could have a better future. Now a case manager at the [New Orleans Children's Health Project \(NOCHP\)](#), Alonso has helped thousands of children and families who immigrated to New Orleans for the same reasons he came here. The Blue Cross Foundation recently named Alonso one of their 2021 [Angel Award](#) recipients for his work. Alonso is one of nine Louisianians honored for his service to children.

Alonso is often the first person people speak to when reaching out to the NOCHP for help. A dedicated line for Spanish speakers rings right to his cell phone, and Alonso helps parents schedule appointments for their children, performs home visits to assess needs and is a trusted voice to help walk immigrants through the complicated process of moving to a new country.

"Immigration is a huge change," says Alonso. "We have to be very brave to do that. It's happening every day with my patients. They feel so confused, they feel sometimes discriminated against, they feel hopeless most of the time. When they finally find someone who can speak their language, who takes time to understand their needs, it makes a difference."

The NOCHP is funded by Tulane Pediatrics, Children's Hospital New Orleans and the Children's Health Fund. The organization sees upwards of 1200 patients a year, and patients' issues extend beyond chronic medical conditions. The families are often experiencing food insecurities and trauma.

"To Miguel, these are not just his patients, these are extensions of his family," says [Kim Mukerjee](#), MD, MPH, Director of Immigrant and Refugee Health and NOCHP and

Assistant Professor of Clinical Pediatrics at Tulane University School of Medicine. “He just takes that extra effort to get to know them on a personal level and that’s what makes the difference.”

The Angel Award recognizes people working to improve the lives of Louisiana’s youngest residents. Each Angel receives a \$25,000 grant to the nonprofit organization of their choice.

“Miguel is our angel,” says Jeanne McKay, program manager of NOCHP. “Despite working tireless hours, Miguel remains optimistic, positive and hopeful in the face of adversity. He is the heart of this program.”

To learn more about the New Orleans Children’s Health Project, [watch this short video](#).