

# Super Bowl events showcase School of Medicine expertise

Carolyn Scofield

scofield@tulane.edu

February 09, 2025 8:00 PM

The Huddle for Health event was one of two NFL Alumni Health events featuring Tulane expertise.

Jaime R. Garza, MD, DDS has three loves of his life: his family, football, and Tulane University. Garza played wide receiver for the Green Wave and is a two-time honoree in their Athletic Hall of Fame. Garza has recently returned to his alma mater as a professor of orthopedic surgery, professor of otolaryngology, and director of human regenerative cell trials at Tulane University School of Medicine.

Among other titles he holds, Garza is also a senior medical advisor to the National Football League, and member of the NFL Alumni Association. The organization puts on a two-day health symposium in the Super Bowl host city every year. With Super Bowl LIX happening in New Orleans, Garza saw an opportunity to bring in Tulane Medicine expertise and give Tulane an international platform to showcase what they do best.

“It was a dream come true, to be honest,” said Garza. “Being a member of the NFL Alumni, Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation board and a Tulane alumnus, it put me in a position to be able help showcase Tulane Medicine.”

“Tulane put on its best and it showed. I’m so happy to see the national and international exposure that they’re getting. Kudos to James Zanewicz for helping to bring it all together.”

The NFL Alumni event included a Huddle for Health day at the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Heddwen Brooks, PhD, Professor and Chair of Physiology, and Gabriella Pridjian, MD, MBA, Professor and Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology, spoke on a panel about women’s health. About 46% of the NFL’s fanbase is female.

Brooks focused on menopause, explaining that nearly every football fan will be impacted in some way, whether they go through the process themselves or know someone who does.

“Everything was done in male preclinical models, but that’s how all research was done,” said Brooks. “Let’s look at female models, that’s what’s important, and then look at the transition as we go across menopause and try and understand how, yes, we might become hypertensive, but we got there in a lot shorter time than you guys did.”

Pridjian discussed maternal health, saying complications that arise during pregnancy are often a precursor for health issues as women age.

“Pregnancy for women is a stress test,” said Pridjian. “If you get gestational diabetes in pregnancy, you’re more likely to get diabetes later in life. Some women develop preeclampsia or other high blood pressure problems while they’re pregnant. Guess what? They have more hypertension and heart disease later in life.”

The NFL Alumni event also included an Innovation in Health symposium at the New Orleans BioInnovation Center. Mike Patriarca, MBA, Vice President and Chief Business Officer at Tulane School of Medicine, discussed how AI could improve healthcare during a panel hosted by Zanewicz, Chief Strategy Officer.

The full symposium was livestreamed on Tulane’s YouTube page and the recordings are available to watch here: [Huddle for Health & Innovation in Health](#)

“It was a great two-day event and I’m so happy that Tulane came through in such a big way,” said Garza. “I think Tulane is going to have a long-time relationship with the NFL Alumni Health going forward.”

