

## Tulane Med-Peds residents provide mental health care with in-home visits

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Residents in the Bayou Bridges spent a year in the classroom before visiting patients at home.

Mental health care is in high demand these days, but it can take months to get an appointment with a psychiatrist or other specialist. A new program called "[BAYOU Bridges](#)" aims to address that shortage by teaching residents how to manage the mental health needs of patients in a primary care setting.

BAYOU stands for “Behavioral and Mental Health for Adolescents and Young Adults with Opioid Use and Other Stressors,” and the program was developed by the Internal Medicine-Pediatrics Residency Program at Tulane University School of Medicine.

“We expect primary care physicians to manage high blood pressure, diabetes, and many other common problems that used to be managed by a subspecialist, but they’re so common now that they often fall under the primary care primary care realm,” says [Jessica DeBord](#), MD, MPH, Associate Professor of Medicine and Pediatrics and director of the Internal Medicine-Pediatrics Residency Program at Tulane. “We think that many common mental and behavioral health issues are also manageable in the primary care setting.”

Residents in the Bayou Bridges program undergo a year of online training created by Tulane faculty in child psychiatry, addiction medicine, social work, and public health. A month of workshops and clinical rotations follows. Residents learn to screen for and manage conditions like depression, anxiety, ADHD, conduct disorder/ODD, substance use disorder, and/or PTSD.

As part of the training, BAYOU Bridges includes a home visit program, allowing residents to provide their patients with individualized, contextualized care.

“Our residents perform these home visits every Thursday afternoon,” said DeBord. “On Fridays, they have a multidisciplinary conference via Zoom, where they can discuss the cases with specialists and get expert advice to optimize patient care.”

As an Internal Medicine Hospitalist, Dr. DeBord rarely gets the chance to see patients outside the clinical setting. These home visits provide a unique opportunity for residents to see firsthand the social determinants impacting their patients’ health.

“It’s gratifying to meet patients where they’re at and help them address their mental and behavioral health concerns,” said DeBord.

BAYOU Bridges is accepting new patients ages 11 to 39 who live within a 20-mile radius of Tulane School of Medicine in downtown New Orleans. To learn more about the home visits program and/or refer a patient (self-referrals allowed), [click here](#).