

Expanding Access to Reproductive Healthcare in New Orleans' Spanish-speaking Communities

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Olivia Sam newcombcommunications@tulane.edu

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This fall semester I had the opportunity to intern at 504HealthNet working on Community Engagement & Research activities as well as Community Outreach activities. 504 Health Net is a collection of nonprofits and governmental

organizations who have partnered together to provide primary care and behavioral care services to people in the Greater New Orleans area with a focus on low-income, under-insured, and uninsured populations. I spent the semester working closely with Currin Wallis, the Executive Director of 504HealthNet, to lay the groundwork for our research and outreach plans targeted at spreading awareness of 504HealthNet's resources regarding reproductive healthcare and expanding reproductive healthcare access in the Greater New Orleans area.

Starting off the semester, I was very new to the world of nonprofits and healthcare in New Orleans, but I soon found myself learning to navigate the complexities of reproductive healthcare with the help of Currin and other interns. One of my main efforts this semester was focused on increasing access to reproductive healthcare in Spanish-speaking communities in New Orleans. First, I collaborated with other interns to create a survey in Spanish asking about people's experiences with healthcare in New Orleans as Spanish-speakers. The survey was aimed toward people whose primary language was Spanish. To determine the best places to distribute the survey, I mapped out Spanish-speaking hotspots around the Greater New Orleans area with the intention of focusing distribution of the survey in these areas. Later in the semester, I combed through healthcare and health insurance databases to create a catalog of Spanish-speaking physicians in the area and pertinent information such as where they practiced, what insurances they accepted, and what type of services they offered to offer a resource people could easily access to find the care they needed. As the semester came to a close, I began work on calling health centers associated with 504HealthNet in Spanish to assess their Spanish language capabilities.

I feel incredibly grateful to have been a part of this experience and would like to thank Currin Wallis, 504HealthNet, and Newcomb Institute for providing these opportunities and continuing to support reproductive healthcare efforts. This semester has taught me a lot about the reproductive healthcare landscape in New Orleans as well as the type of work I am interested in continuing to do during my time here. This experience has only strengthened my interest in reproductive healthcare, and I am eager to continue my work with 504HealthNet into the new year as an intern in the spring.