Ride to Recovery

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Within 5 days of Hurricane Katrina, units from the Children's Health Fund's (CHF) national fleet of mobile medical units arrived in Mississippi and Louisiana to provide care. Eventually, 3 permanent projects were developed in partnership with the Coastal Family Health Center (Biloxi, MS), Tulane University School of Medicine (New Orleans, LA), and Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center School of Medicine (Baton Rouge), respectively. Since that time, CHF has worked with its local partnering institutions to expand its vision of a pediatric "medical home" for displaced and disadvantaged children and families to include mental health services, as delivered by therapists from Community Support Resilience units. By 2008, the projects had provided more than 19 000 medical and mental health visits in the Gulf region.

The scenario depicted on the cover is typical of CHF projects. The Mississippi Gulf Coast Children's Project van is parked at a retail facility specifically designed for small business development for citizens affected by Katrina, and is within walking distance of 3 schools and neighborhoods. The proximity to multiple entities further eliminates transportation as a barrier to access and ensures the availability of care in areas with sparse medical facilities. In addition, electronic health records, point-of-care testing, a multidisciplinary team, and attention to statistically prevalent concerns enhance the provision of value-added services.

CHF ensures access to health care excellence by strategically using research to inform clinical practice and advocacy, clinical practice to inform research and advocacy, and advocacy to help maintain the spotlight on a continuing problem.

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