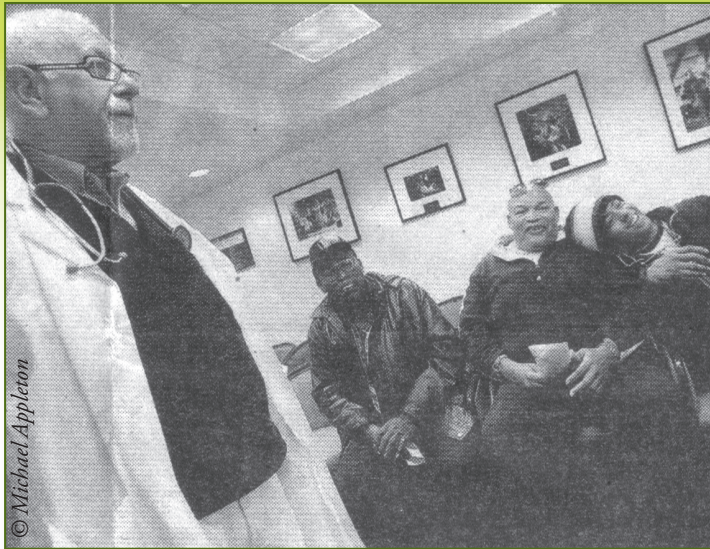


La. Musicians' Clinic Plays Part

by Nicole Bode, New York Daily News

February 15, 2006 – Jo Davis sat down in the small medical clinic lobby and waited to pick up a refill prescription for his diabetes medicine. As he pushed the blue-tinted sunglasses back on his shaved head and settled back into his chair, a man stepped out of the doctor's office and declared, "Jo Cool!"

"Yeah!" said Davis, 53, a pioneering gospel singer who has headlined at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival for the past decade. He reached up for a handshake and flashed a gold-toothed smile, saying, "What you been up to?" Within minutes, Davis and Jose Francois, 61, a veteran R&B singer, had caught up on everything from their families to their current living conditions to the plight of local performers returning to the city after being forced out by Hurricane Katrina.



Musicians (seated L to R) Jose Francois, Jo (Cool) Davis and John Boutte in waiting room at New Orleans Musicians' Clinic, which offers low-cost health services. Dr. Henry Rothschild looks on.

"It's good to see many of us together because we lost so many," said Francois, who has been living on a cruise ship on the Mississippi River and gigging on Bourbon St. "We cherish this."

Colorful reunions are a familiar scene in the New Orleans Musicians' Clinic, a not-for-profit medical facility in the uptown section of the city that provides low-cost health care to local musicians and their families. The eight-year-old clinic, which moved two hours west of the city after Katrina before returning to New Orleans in mid-December, is one of the few medical providers still operating here. With the support of the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, the Daughters of Charity and the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation, the group has been working to bring back the city's vast wealth of performers, many of whom remain scattered by the storm.

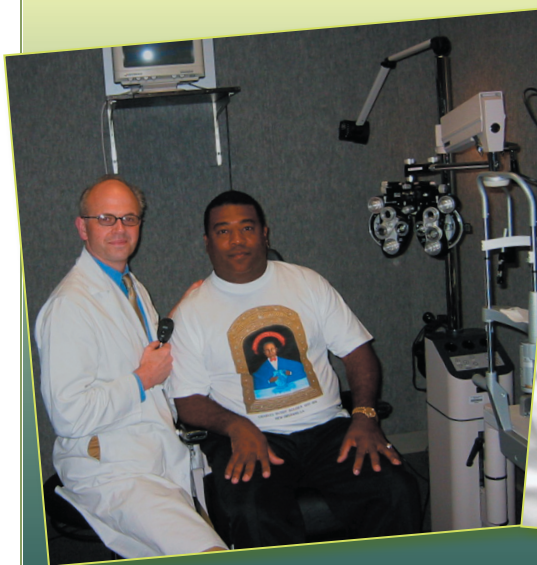
Before Katrina, the clinic served 3,500 patients. Since its return to the city in December, organizers estimate it has served fewer than 300. With affordable medical care available, organizers say, musicians have one less obstacle to coming back and helping resuscitate the city.

"They're our cultural icons," said Johann Bultman, who founded the clinic with his wife, Bethany. "They give to the city and the economy so much through their art and their gift. And so many of them are making so little money."

Three of the clinic's offices in the city were destroyed by the storm, along with the patient records and donor mailing lists. Still, the clinic has managed to raise and distribute more than \$200,000 to local musicians so far, and plans to continue. In exchange for a \$25 copayment, patients get a full physical, lab tests and referrals for additional care. They also have access to affordable prescription drugs. And word seems to be getting out, as more and more musicians pour in the door.

"If you're going to bring the city back, you got to bring it back with the musicians," Davis said. "If it wasn't for this place, I'd be out." +

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Left: NOMC specialists from the LSU Medical School conduct research into occupational risks for musicians including the indicators for loss of hearing range and glaucoma in horn players.



Right: Famed musician, poet, journalist and DJ John Sinclair returns to the NOMC from his new home in Amsterdam to get a check up from NOMC Clinical Coordinator, Catherine Lasperches, FNP.

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