



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Xavier receives Blue Cross grant award for innovative hypertension study**

*Researchers will study the relationship between alternative medicine and uncontrolled hypertension*

(New Orleans, LA) – The [Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation](#) has awarded a \$10,000 New Horizons grant to the researchers at [Xavier University](#) to study the relationship between the reliance on alternative medicine and uncontrolled hypertension.

For patients with hypertension – especially those who are older – sticking with prescribed medications and health routines is essential to treating hypertension. Led by Dr. LaKeisha Williams, a research team from Xavier will test whether an overreliance on complementary or alternative medicine (CAM), such as home remedies, leads to a higher mortality rate for those with hypertension, particularly among African Americans. Researchers will also examine steps for boosting adherence to doctor-prescribed treatment.

The grant award is made under the [Blue Cross Foundation's New Horizons grant fund](#), which invests in new and innovative approaches to address persistent health and quality of life issues in Louisiana – in this case, persistent hypertension rates that place Louisiana low in overall health rankings.

“Some studies have suggested that African American hypertension patients who use alternative medicine tend to have lower adherence rates to their antihypertensive medication and are less likely to talk with a doctor or pharmacist about using that alternative medicine,” says Williams.

Xavier’s president, [Dr. C. Reynold Verret](#) adds, “We are proud of our researchers and their contribution to this important body of work. The information and insights that they uncover will allow us to better address disparities in adherence to medication and will provide new perspectives for design of interventions that improve the health of our community.”

For Blue Cross Foundation president [Michael Tipton](#), this New Horizons project is especially important: “In Louisiana, where race-based disparities are especially prominent, this kind of research is essential. We are confident in this team and know that the insights this study will yield will be invaluable in improving hypertension treatment in our state and beyond.”

More information about the New Horizons grant program and the Foundation is available at [www.bcbslafoundation.org](#). To learn more about Xavier University of Louisiana, visit [www.xula.edu](#).

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## **About the Blue Cross Foundation**

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation works each day to improve the health and lives of Louisianians by empowering everyday people to do extraordinary good. By building and funding coalitions of friends, families and neighbors, the Foundation hopes to build a healthier Louisiana, particularly for its children. The foundation is funded solely by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana, but is a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity. Together Blue Cross and the Blue Cross Foundation invest \$2.5 million each year into Louisiana's communities and nonprofits.

## **About Xavier University of Louisiana**

XULA students Leave Ready to serve, care, and lead their communities. For more information about Xavier University of Louisiana visit us online at [www.xula.edu](http://www.xula.edu) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), or [Twitter @XULA1925](#). Take a moment to learn more about how Xavier is preparing students for the future at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sD4mb-jYZC8>.

Once again, Xavier University of Louisiana received national accolades as one of the best universities in the country. Most notably, XULA is ranked as the best value among southern regional colleges and universities in the 2018 edition of "Best Colleges" by the U.S. News Media Group. Xavier also ranked No.1 in its grouping, heading the list of only 15 schools that qualified for the Southern Region category listed under "Great Schools, Great Prices."

To book interviews about our recent accomplishments and or to speak with our experts in the field of pharmacy, premed, public health, science, technology, math, business, English, communications and the arts, contact Patrice Bell Mercadel, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer at 504-520-5452 or via email at [pbellmer@xula.edu](mailto:pbellmer@xula.edu).

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