News



In Liberia, nearly 30% of the population lives more than 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the nearest health facility. Since 2007, Last Mile Health has partnered with the Ministry of Health to build a workforce of community health workers who cross footbridges and canoe rivers to bring life-saving care to remote communities. The group now serves every county nationwide. (©Last Mile Health)



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A nongovernmental organization that champions community-based healthcare and helps deliver primary healthcare services in four African countries is the 2026 recipient of the Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize.

Last Mile Health, which the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation said supports more than 20,000 professional health workers in Ethiopia, Liberia, Malawi and Sierra Leone, has helped provide primary healthcare to more than 32 million people.

As the prize recipient, Last Mile Health, which is based in Accra, Ghana, will receive $3 million in unrestricted funding from the foundation.

In an Aug. 12 announcement, the foundation said a key component of Last Mile Health's work is to partner with government bodies in the four countries "to equip skilled and compassionate community health workers with the resources they need to provide essential primary healthcare to remote communities that otherwise lack access — so-called 'last mile' communities."

At the core of its work is working with governments "to build strong community health systems that equip professional community health workers to provide primary healthcare in the world's most remote communities," the Hilton announcement said.

"Last Mile Health's work is urgently important in times of crisis and calm," the foundation said. It added that at "a moment when reductions in global aid are straining under-resourced health systems, Last Mile Health's model offers a powerful example of how countries can strengthen access to care through local health workers."

It said that an estimated 2 billion people live in remote rural communities which are often "outside the reach of healthcare, contributing to unacceptably high rates of maternal and child mortality."

The recent outbreaks of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda show that the consequences of gaps in healthcare access become "even more urgent during public health emergencies," the foundation said.

While noting that the Hilton honoree does not work directly in the Ebola-affected countries, the Hilton announcement said "the challenges in the region underscore the need for trusted, well-supported community health workers as the foundation of resilient health systems."

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In the announcement, Peter Laugharn, the president and CEO of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation said Last Mile Health's work "embodies Conrad N. Hilton's enduring belief that improving the human condition is our shared responsibility."

Laugharn added: "Across Africa, Last Mile Health's work is ensuring that care reaches millions of people who have historically been left behind. These are neighbors caring for neighbors and communities building stronger systems from within."

Eight members of a prize jury selected Last Mile Health for the honor. They were Helen Clark, the former prime minister of New Zealand; Leymah Gbowee, a Liberian peace activist; Conrad N. Hilton III; Sr. Joyce Meyer, a member of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Hilton Foundation board member; Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan; Kennedy Odede, a Kenyan author and social entrepreneur; Zainab Salbi, an Iraqi-American women's rights activist and writer; and Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León, an economist and former president of Mexico.

Meyer, who is the international sister liaison for Global Sisters Report, which receives major funding from the Hilton Foundation, said Last Mile Health rose to the top of consideration because "it seeks out the most forgotten and is extraordinarily collaborative with local organizations and governments to ensure sustainability into the future."

In the announcement, Lisha McCormick, the CEO of Last Mile Health, said that the organization — including its many community health workers — are "deeply honored" to receive the prize.

"This recognition affirms a simple but powerful idea: where someone lives should not determine whether they receive healthcare. In partnership with local communities and governments, we are helping shift how healthcare is delivered and financed across Africa, working to ensure that access to quality primary healthcare is

universal."

The Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize is the world's largest annual humanitarian award and is presented to a nonprofit organization judged to have made "extraordinary contributions toward alleviating human suffering."

Last Mile Health, which was founded nearly 20 years ago, has also co-founded Africa Frontline First, an initiative for the entire African continent "to drive smarter, more effective financing for community health."

The group will be honored at an Oct. 6 prize ceremony in Los Angeles.