

Speaker HIGHLIGHTS

The tradition of scientific presentations at Mayo Clinic Alumni Association biennial meetings is complemented by a lecture program that highlights individuals who have expertise in medical specialties or areas of research.



John Hardman, M.D.
President/CEO, The Carter Center
**Not Neglecting Neglected Diseases
for 24 Years and Counting ...**

Raymond D. Pruitt Lectureship

Honors Raymond D. Pruitt, the first dean of Mayo Medical School. Lecturer demonstrates qualities admired in Dr. Pruitt — integrity, scholarship, humility and the empathy of the truly concerned

Dr. Hardman (P '71) provides leadership for The Carter Center and its program initiatives. The Carter Center is a not-for-profit nongovernmental organization, founded in 1982 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, in partnership with Emory University to advance peace and health worldwide. Dr. Hardman's lecture focused on the Center's work to prevent diseases in the world's poorest countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

■ The Guinea Worm Eradication Program, The Carter Center's leading global campaign since 1986, has resulted in a reduction of Guinea worm disease from approximately 3.5 million cases in 20 countries to fewer than 3,500 cases in four countries in 2009. The World Health Assembly has declared that Guinea worm disease should be eradicated, and many involved in international health efforts believe it

may be the first parasitic disease to be eradicated and the first disease in history to be eradicated through changes in human behavior — without a vaccine or a cure. Because this painful disease occurs when a person drinks stagnant water contaminated with Guinea worm larvae, educating people about disease-prevention measures is critical.

■ The Carter Center has worked to control or, in some cases, eliminate trachoma, the world's leading infectious cause of blindness, from six countries in Africa. A preventable disease eliminated from much of the developed world, trachoma persists in developing areas where water access and sanitation are challenges. Carter Center efforts include providing surgery to treat advanced cases, distribution of antibiotics, health education and new latrines. As a result, a 55 percent reduction in the disease occurred from 2003 to 2007



Former first lady Rosalynn Carter holds a feverish child after the child was tested for malaria during a visit to Centre Medico-Sociale in Ouanaminthe, Haiti, Oct. 7, 2009. Looking on (from left) are Vice President for Health Programs, Dr. Donald Hopkins; Carter Center President and CEO, Dr. John Hardman; Dr. Joanel Mondestin; and former U.S. President Jimmy Carter.

in Amhara, Ethiopia, one of the world's most trachoma-endemic regions. In 2008, with support from The Carter Center, Ghana became the first sub-Saharan African country to eliminate trachoma as a public health problem.

- The Carter Center has led efforts to eliminate the world's second-leading infectious cause of blindness, river blindness (onchocerciasis), in the Americas since 1996 and strives to stop all transmission of the disease in the Americas by 2012.

- The Carter Center has assisted Ethiopia in combating malaria with a complete bed net coverage program by integrating malaria interventions into already established river blindness and trachoma prevention activities in endemic communities. This involved assisting the country's Ministry of Health in free distribution of long-lasting insecticidal bed nets to protect all 50 million Ethiopians at risk for malaria — an effort completed in 2007.

- After malaria, the most socioeconomically devastating parasitic disease is schistosomiasis. This chronic disease is found where water contains freshwater

snails infected with the parasite. In Nigeria, the most schistosomiasis-endemic country in Africa, The Carter Center provides critical health education and treatment. Studies of those treated show that within six months of receiving a dose of praziquantel, as much as 90 percent of the damage due to schistosomiasis infection can be reversed. In 2008, The Carter Center-assisted Schistosomiasis Program treated more than 1 million people. Since 1998, The Carter Center, in partnership with the government of Nigeria, has worked to eliminate lymphatic filariasis from two Nigerian states. This effort interrupted transmission of the disease in 10 of 30 districts. This parasitic, infectious disease has been declared one of six potentially eradicable diseases.

Dr. Hardman summed up Carter Center efforts in the last 24 years as having achieved:

- 81 million Guinea worm episodes averted
- 125 million Mectizan® treatments for onchocerciasis
- 31 million Zithromax® treatments for trachoma

- 25 million Mectizan/albendazole treatments of lymphatic filariasis
- 4 million bed nets distributed
- 3 million treatments for schistosomiasis
- 1 million household latrines constructed

“Before The Carter Center began its work, diseases like Guinea worm and river blindness were seen as intractable — a fact of life in the world's poorest countries. The Carter Center has turned conventional wisdom on its head and reminded the world that seemingly impossible obstacles can be overcome with the right combination of innovation, dedication and community involvement.”

Nils Daulaire, M.D.
President and CEO
Global Health Council