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# Changing the game for global health care



By **Christi Scott**

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6 photos: OneWorld Health's Masindi Kitara Medical Center in Uganda

Dr. Dan, a medical officer at OneWorld Health's Masindi Kitara Medical Center, meets with a mother a child.

## Story highlights

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OneWorld Health helps communities provide their own quality health care

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It aims to open fully operational clinics within 18 months of their launch

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Trained nationals staff the clinics, which are in Uganda and Nicaragua

**(CNN)** — You've probably seen their faces on TV -- eyes tired and longing for a sense of hope.

Faces of children that say everything without speaking a single word.

Faces of people that draw you into their reality, desperate for a helping hand.

Many non-profit organizations that provide medical aid to the developing world have commercials that tug at the heartstrings, but one group is taking a new approach.

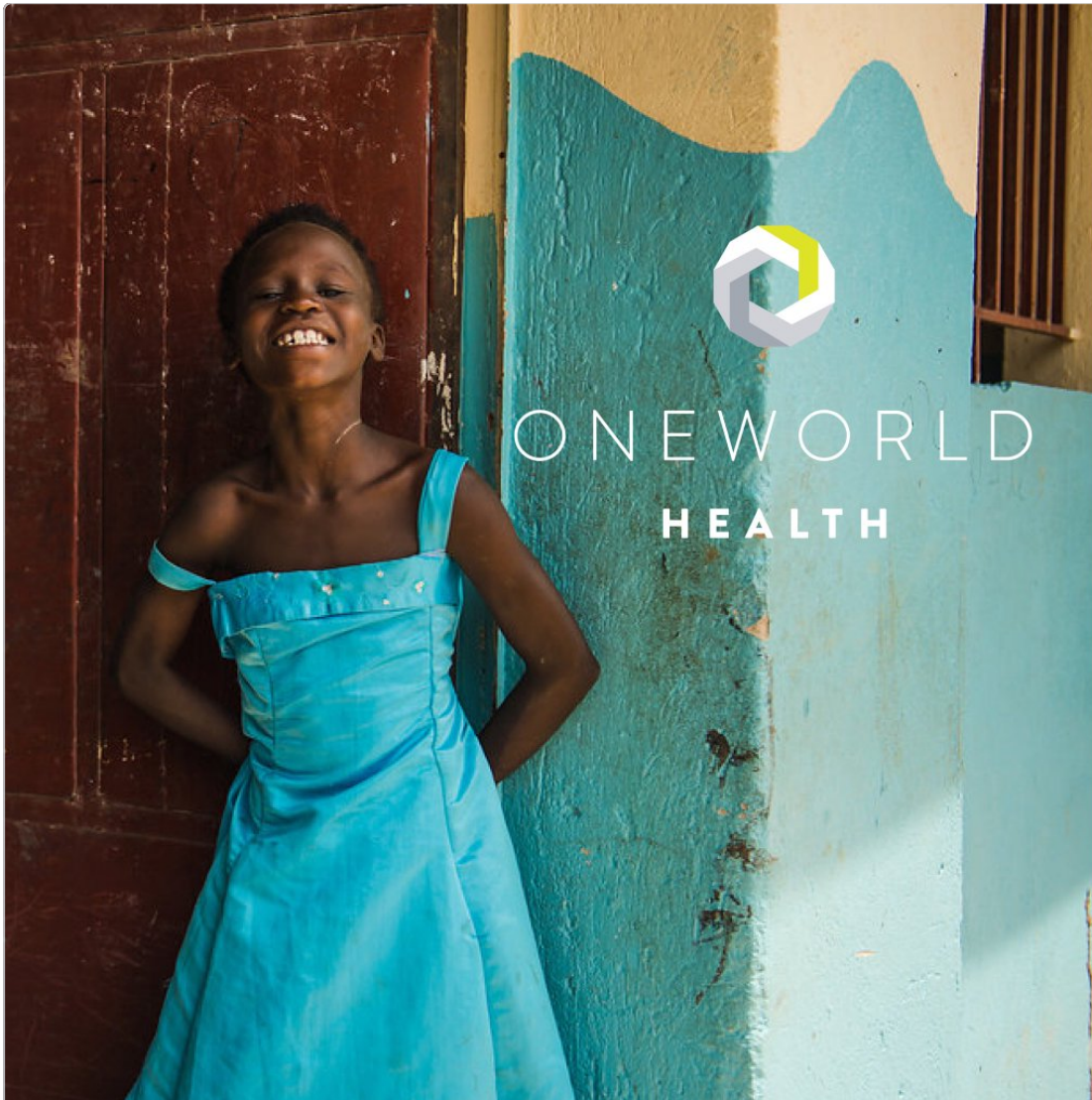
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## The approach

Traditionally, a lack of resources in staff and supplies at private clinics drives up the cost of care, which is often too high for a majority of the impoverished communities to afford.

[OneWorld Health](#) says it has developed a model to change that: Health centers that are 100% sustainable, with affordable care and no need for ongoing support to keep the doors open.

Through the reasonable cost, clinics can become fully operational and self-sustaining within 18 months of their launch, the South Carolina-based non-profit says.



**OneWorld Health**  
@OneWorldHealth

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Our vision @oneworldhealth is to empower communities to achieve long-term improvements in health and quality of life

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"Our sustainable health care center model has transformed the culture of health care in the areas of the world in which we operate," said International Projects Director Michael O'Neal. "We believe that by investing in the communities where we work, a greater impact can be made and each medical center will exist long after we are gone."

The organization hopes that each health center will remain operationally sustainable for generations to come, allowing for hundreds of thousands of patients to receive quality health care without donor support.

# 'Transforming communities'

OneWorld Health currently has four operational health centers (two each in Uganda and Nicaragua), and one mobile medical unit in Nicaragua, which serves thousands of patients each month.



Thirteen months after opening its first health care center in Uganda, patient fees began covering and then exceeding the project's operating costs, OneWorld Health says, "meaning that the project was 100% self-sustaining with no additional donor funding required for thousands of people to receive health care."

Last month the non-profit opened the doors to its second clinic in Uganda, 14 months after its conceptualization -- no small feat in the world of non-governmental organizations.

At the time, the organization was operating as [Palmetto Medical Initiative](#), but it rebranded itself OneWorld Health this week to better reflect its global vision.

"When PMI first started, we envisioned transforming health care in communities throughout the developing world," said co-founder and Chief Executive Matt Alexander. "In seven short years we have been astounded at just how well this idea, to bring sustainable health care to Uganda and Nicaragua, would flourish and grow into a model that empowers communities and gives individuals the ability to take ownership (of) their health."

Though the Charleston-based group has a new name, its mission remains the same: to help communities achieve

long-term improvements in health and quality of life.

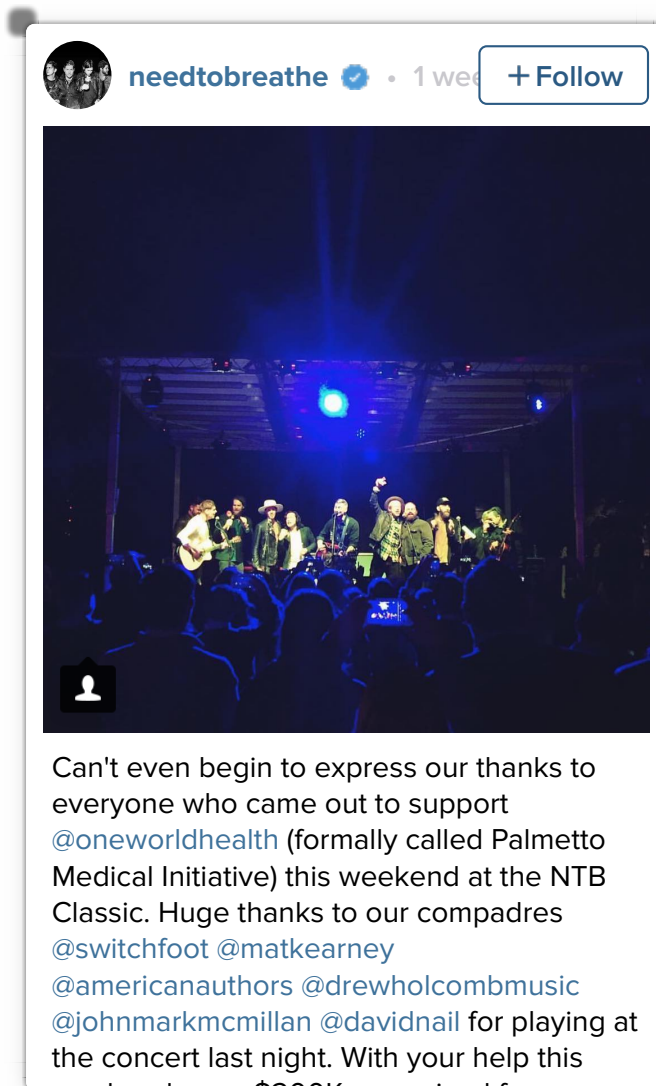
Since the funding it receives does not have to be devoted continually to existing sites, OneWorld Health is able to use the money to invest in new health centers.

## More centers opening

The Grammy-nominated band [Needtobreathe](#) partnered with OneWorld Health and recently raised the funds needed for them to open a new center in Tola, Nicaragua.

"Every dollar raised allows OneWorld Health to expand and start new medical centers throughout East Africa and Central America," said Strategic Communications Consultant Stefani Drake.

Thanks to additional fundraising efforts from the fourth annual [Needtobreathe Classic](#) auction and golf tournament, they also raised over \$200,000 for the non-profit.



# NEEDTOBREATHE & Palmetto Medical Initiative in Uganda



In addition to the new Tola health center, OneWorld Health is working to open two additional clinics later this year.

Once the clinics are open, they will be staffed and run by national staff who receive ongoing training from U.S. board-certified medical professionals. "Each year we have plans to grow our presence in East Africa and Central America in order to transform the culture of health care and empower communities to see a true impact in their health," Drake said.

Which means help is coming to many more of those pleading faces.



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