

*Paul E. Farmer, MD, PhD*



RECIPIENT OF THE 2006 JIMMY AND ROSALYNN  
CARTER AWARD FOR HUMANITARIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO  
THE HEALTH OF HUMANKIND

**P**hysician-anthropologist Paul Farmer has dedicated his life to treating some of the world's poorest populations, in the process helping to raise the standard of health care for the destitute sick everywhere. He is this year's recipient of the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Award for Humanitarian Contributions to the Health of Humankind.

Dr. Farmer is a founding director of Partners in Health (PIH), a Boston-based non-profit organization dedicated to providing direct health care services and conducting research and advocacy activities on behalf of those who are ill and living in poverty—not as an act of charity but as a contribution to social justice and basic human rights. Partners in Health began modestly in 1983 as a one-room clinic in Cange, a squatter settlement in impoverished rural Haiti. The facility, named Clinique Bon Sauveur, has become a model for the delivery of quality medical care to the world's poorest citizens. Today, the complex consists of a 104-bed hospital with two operating rooms, a TB facility designated as a national referral center for multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR TB), an HIV/TB ward, a women's clinic, pediatric and adult inpatient wards, a pharmacy, a Red Cross blood bank, and extensive training, education, and social support programs. In addition to its extensive operations in Haiti, Partners in Health also tackles tuberculosis, AIDS, and other diseases disproportionately afflicting the poor in Peru, Russia, Mexico, Guatemala, Rwanda, and even in inner-city Boston. PIH's unique community-based approach offers not only lifesaving medical care and treatment but also food, clean water, housing, education, and other social services, all delivered by trained and stipended local

residents serving as community health workers.

Dr. Farmer and his colleagues have successfully challenged those policymakers and critics who claim that quality health care is impossible to deliver in impoverished settings. Partners in Health was one of the first organizations in the world to treat poor people with AIDS; these efforts were paramount in helping Haiti to qualify for a \$13 million grant from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria in 2002. These resources allowed Partners in Health to expand its treatment facilities to neighboring communities, where it is now the only health care provider for a million peasant farmers in Haiti's Central Plateau. In addition to groundbreaking work in HIV/AIDS, Dr. Farmer is also widely recognized as an authority on tuberculosis treatment and control and has helped lead the international response to multidrug-resistant tuberculosis by establishing pilot treatment programs and organizing effective delivery systems for medications.

"We've proven that people in poor settings with very complex diseases can be treated and cured," Dr. Farmer says. "We've had some victories, but if I were truly influential, everyone in the world would have the right to healthcare, food, clean water, and other basics. That's the goal."

Dr. Farmer received his bachelor's degree from Duke University in 1982. In 1990 he earned his MD and PhD in anthropology simultaneously from Harvard University. Currently, he is the Presley Professor of Medical Anthropology in the Department of Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School. He also trains students, residents, and fellows at the Brigham and Women's Hospital, where he is an attending physician in infectious diseases and associate chief of the Divi-



sion of Social Medicine and Health Inequalities.

Through his scholarly books and articles, Dr. Farmer compellingly conveys the health needs of the poor and exposes the failure of the global community to respond to those needs; his most recent book is *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*. He has been a visiting professor at institutions around the world.

Among the numerous awards Dr. Farmer has received are the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation “genius award”; the Duke University Humanitarian Award; and the Heinz Award for the Human Condition. While accepting the Heinz Award in 2003, Dr. Farmer stated, “as members of the world community, we must recognize that we can and should summon our collective resources to save countless lives that we previously alleged to be beyond our help.” In 2005, Partners in Health received the \$1.5-million Hilton Humanitarian Prize. Dr. Farmer is the subject of Pulitzer Prizewinner Tracy Kidder’s *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World*.

Dr. Joseph B. Martin, dean of Harvard Medical School, describes Paul Farmer as follows: “Dr. Farmer has committed his life to treating the poorest of the poor and eliminating the inequities of global public health. His vision, leadership, commitment and dedication are influencing a new generation of physicians, affecting policy by raising the consciousness of policy-makers, and ultimately improving the health of mankind by acquiring and administering treatment for thousands of patients who would otherwise be left untreated.”



*As members of the world community, we must recognize that we can and should summon our collective resources to save countless lives that we previously alleged to be beyond our help.* — PAUL E. FARMER