

DAY  
2

## HEALTHCARE

*God's reach  
through healthcare*

Medical volunteer Anna Leigh Breedlove plays with a toddler in the pediatric ward of the Baptist Medical Centre of Nalerigu, Ghana. Healthcare missions gives access to the unreached, allows for intimate conversations, meets needs, makes disciples and empowers the church. IMB Photo



Word spread quickly in this North African town. A medical clinic arrived, and anyone is welcome. Setting up in a local church gave some people pause, but free healthcare is hard to turn down.

Security guards sent by the local government wander close by. They are used to keeping a close watch on activities hosted by Christians. The medical needs in the area are numerous and most people have very few opportunities to see a doctor or nurse or even get needed medicines. This time police choose not to deny people entry. The clinics don't seem to cause trouble in the community.

International Mission Board missionaries Patrick and Anne Stein work with ministry partners to facilitate medical clinics all over the country. Healthcare strategies offer access to people they wouldn't even have a chance to meet, let alone engage in gospel conversation. By meeting physical needs, believers can also bring the cure to their greatest spiritual need — separation from Jesus.

The Steins are used to being watched. It's part of their lives in a region where Christians are not always welcomed. Inside the church, though, set up on these days to receive patients, security is relaxed. Even the police are invited to have their blood pressure checked or see a doctor.

People come ready for help, but they also come ready to talk. They bring their ailments, their concerns and even their spiritual questions. One patient seeks care for an infection.

Another had a dream last night and wonders if someone in the church can help them understand it.

Healthcare professionals are ready to receive them, but so are Christians trained in evangelism, discipleship and church planting. The Steins train several hundred people each year in gospel-sharing strategies; many are used alongside the medical clinics. They see countless relationships built as contact information is traded and follow-up visits in homes are added to calendars.

It's usually after the clinic has closed that church members find those who are ready to accept Christ. People come for the free medicine, but some find eternal life. The Steins hear reports from their partnering churches about those who have come to faith. After one clinic in the fall of 2021, more than 60 people made professions of faith as a result of the relationships started.

In one town, the good will formed by a church clinic was so strong that local police and religious leaders allowed a pastor to hold prayer meetings. People of different faiths were invited to ask the pastor to pray for them in Jesus' name. This exposure to the gospel is unprecedented in most countries where the growth of Christianity is strictly guarded.

Pray for the Steins and their work among the lost of Northern Africa. Ask God to bring boldness and wisdom to the believers in these areas. Pray for continued access to the lost through healthcare strategies around the world.

Dr. Buck Rusher prays over the patient, doctors and nurses prior to a surgery. He performs and gives consultation to patients and doctors in the rural hospital in Khoved, Mongolia. Caring for the needs of people is integral to the missionary task. IMB Photo

