

HISTORY OF CHHF

In 1987, Barnwell (SC) family physician Dr. Henry Gibson made his first trip to Honduras, working at a clinic operated by churches on the island of Utila. With no doctor on the island, a local nurse staffed the clinic and volunteer physicians provided medical care for one or two weeks at a time.

After several trips to Utila, Dr. Gibson and a missionary dentist worked deep in the mountains and along the coast of mainland Honduras. Setting up make-shift clinics in schools or churches, they would often treat patients who had never seen a doctor or dentist.

With a volunteer team of ten, in 1995 Dr. Gibson made his first trip to Limón in the Department of Colon. He chose Limón, located on the Mosquito Coast of Honduras, because of its remote location where thousands of people live with minimal or no medical care. The first team of volunteers set up medical, dental, and pharmacy areas in a church and treated more than 250 patients a day.

Upon his return home, Dr. Gibson began seeking support for the founding of a charitable organization which would provide medical care to the people of the Limón area. The local newspaper ran an article about this desire to build a clinic in Limón, and a group came forward offering to hold a fundraiser. Barnwell businessman David Cannon, Batesburg (SC) pharmacist Bob Owen, and Leesville (SC) dentist John Parler became actively involved. Thus, the Carolina-Honduras Health Foundation (CHHF) was incorporated in South Carolina in 1995.

In March 1997, the Carolina Health Clinic was dedicated in Limón so that doctors and dentists no longer had to work in make-shift facilities. Over the years the clinic has been expanded several times and today serves as both a medical/dental facility and a residential building for volunteer teams.



Limón clinic today

In 1999 an education building was added to provide a location for health education programs in the community.



Education Building

In 2000 a satellite clinic was opened in Icoteas, an even more remote village about 45 minutes from Limón. This satellite clinic serves a large population southeast of Limón along the Mosquito Coast.



Left: Care taker home - Right: Icoteas Clinic

In 2014 CHHF began working with the Missionary Health Service to staff the Whispering Hope Clinic in the village of Chapagua near Trujillo. This clinic is the only source of medical care for 12 villages in the nearby area. Medical, dental and ophthalmic care is provided by volunteer teams from the States.



Whispering Hope Clinic