



## Businesses Making an Impact

By Diana Ransom

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### **BroadReach Healthcare**

**Founded:** 2003

**Location:** Washington, D.C.

**Model:** For-profit

**Annual Revenue:** \$15 million

**Focus:** Health

While in medical school, John Sargent and fellow med student Ernest Darkoh, who had both spent a great deal of time overseas, found themselves pondering the question: "Why is it that you can get a Coca Cola in remote areas of the world, but you can't get aspirin?"

That's when Sargent realized that the health-care community could learn a thing or two from for-profit businesses. And upon graduation, rather than practicing medicine, he and Darkoh sought out a heavy dose of the business world via management consulting.

They then realized that many of the market failures they saw in developing countries stemmed from limited distribution and access to care. For example, says Sargent, the free aid was there, "but they are poor and they [typically] have to go to a government facility that is 20 or 30 miles away." As a result, many impoverished individuals couldn't get care, he says.

By creating a network of private doctors that provide free or subsidized aid (similar to how the Medicare system works in the U.S.) BroadReach is bringing doctors closer to individuals in need. While these efforts are mostly philanthropic, BroadReach, which operates as a for-profit entity, also consults with private clients such as pharmaceutical companies and multinational firms regarding the handling of infectious diseases in the workplace.

BroadReach continues to experiment with other initiatives and hopes to one day form a nonprofit arm to receive added foundation and government funding, Sargent says. However, he remains adamant about one thing: "I believe in the power of the free market to create sustainable change."