



It was more than two decades ago that former President Jimmy Carter saw his first case of Guinea Worm, the flesh-burrowing parasite that for centuries has caused agony in poor, remote parts of the world. But Mr. Carter recalls that moment—an image forever seared in his mind—as if it were yesterday.

It was 1988, and Mr. Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, were visiting Denchira, a village outside of Accra, Ghana, where almost half the 500 residents were suffering from Guinea Worm. One of them, a young woman who appeared to be cradling an infant, caught Mr. Carter's eye.

"When I got close to her, I realized it was not an infant she was cradling, but her swollen right breast, and a Guinea Worm was coming out of her nipple," Mr. Carter says. "It was shocking to me."

"It's nauseating to see, and it's difficult to sleep at night