

RECKITT CATALYST AND SERENA WILLIAMS HEADLINE SXSW WITH U.S. ENTREPRENEURS EXPANDING ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

- A new generation of community-based entrepreneurs is shaping the future of health and hygiene via Reckitt Catalyst
- In the U.S., Catalyst aims to improve access to essential health solutions

AUSTIN, Texas, March 13, 2026 – Today, Reckitt, the company behind some of the world’s most trusted health and hygiene brands, brings two newly named U.S. entrepreneurs from its [Reckitt Catalyst](#) program to the South by Southwest (SXSW) stage. They will appear alongside entrepreneur-in-residence Serena Williams for the featured session, “Breaking Barriers, Building Solutions: Meet the Entrepreneurs Transforming Health Innovation,” a conversation about the systemic barriers founders navigate as they work to expand access to care in their communities.

Reckitt Catalyst is a global social impact investment program that supports and scales health and hygiene ventures founded by women and underrepresented entrepreneurs. These founders are often closest to the challenges they are working to solve, yet they remain overlooked by traditional investors. In the U.S., Catalyst is focused on addressing one of the country’s most persistent challenges: the lack of access to basic healthcare services.

“Here in the U.S., roughly 1 in 3 people¹ have limited or no access to essential health services such as hospitals, pharmacies and primary care providers,” said Ryan Dullea, chief category growth officer at Reckitt. “That’s the environment these founders are working in every day. As a company with global reach, our job is to use our platform to support our founders in scaling practical solutions in their communities. They’re the ones quietly building the solutions their communities need.”

Through 2030, the Catalyst program will support up to 200 entrepreneurs globally, aiming to impact up to five million people. Of that class, as many as 29 ventures will be named in the U.S. with the goal of improving access to healthcare and relieving pressure on the overburdened health system. In partnership with Acumen America, Catalyst launched with an open call to entrepreneurs last year, which is ongoing. Additional eligible U.S. founders are invited to apply at [Reckitt.com](#).

Serena Williams will be joined on the panel at SXSW by Ryan Dullea; Catherine Casey Nanda, managing partner at Acumen America; and the founders of two Catalyst ventures — Kwamane Liddell, founder of [ThriveLink](#), and Mika Eddy, cofounder of [Malama Health](#). Together, they will examine how community-based innovators are addressing persistent health challenges in the U.S., where over 100 million Americans face barriers to accessing primary care², and why maximizing that impact requires more than capital alone.

¹ Nguyen, A. & Chase, L. (2023, October 10) Mapping healthcare deserts: Over 80% of the country still lacks adequate access to healthcare. GoodRx: <https://www.goodrx.com/healthcare-access/research/updated-healthcare-deserts>

² National Association of Community Health Centers. (2023) *Closing the primary care gap: How community health centers can meet the needs of underserved communities*. https://www.nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Closing-the-Primary-Care-Gap_Full-Report_2023_digital-final.pdf

“This partnership is about shifting power and resources toward the people best positioned to solve America’s greatest health challenges,” said Catherine Casey Nanda, co-founder and managing partner at Acumen America. “Women and underrepresented founders are often the backbone of the healthcare workforce but remain significantly underfunded. By joining forces with Reckitt and Serena Williams, we are providing the strategic guidance and capital necessary to turn these bold ideas into lasting, system-changing companies that can improve health equity across America.”

Unveiling the first U.S. Catalyst cohort

Reckitt Catalyst’s U.S. cohort includes founders working across community-rooted health solutions that address urgent access gaps and real-world barriers to care.

The supported entrepreneurs include:

- **Kwamane Liddell, founder of ThriveLink** – Innovator of telephonic AI tools that help people with literacy, technology or access barriers navigate healthcare and social services, unlocking resources and reducing administrative burden.
- **Mika Eddy, cofounder of Malama Health** – Co-architect behind doula-led, AI-supported maternal care for families insured through Medicaid, improving pregnancy and postpartum outcomes through continuous support from doulas, clinicians and digital tools.
- **Emily Brown, founder and CEO of Attane Health** - Leader of a digital food-as-medicine platform delivering personalized nutrition support and medically tailored groceries to Medicaid populations managing chronic conditions.
- **Amanda Ducach, founder and CEO of Ema** - Creator of an AI-powered women’s health companion offering personalized, evidence-based support from fertility through menopause to reduce anxiety and improve access to trusted care.
- **Erik Cardenas, cofounder and CEO of Zócalo Health** - Cofounder of a culturally aligned, bilingual primary care service expanding affordable, trusted care access for Latino communities across multiple states.

“It’s been a privilege to be part of choosing this first cohort and mentoring these founders has already been one of the most inspiring parts of my work with Reckitt Catalyst,” said Serena Williams, entrepreneur in residence at Reckitt Catalyst. “Their ideas come directly from the challenges they see around them, and that authenticity is what drives real innovation. I’m excited to join them at SXSW and help open more doors for women and underrepresented entrepreneurs who deserve the chance to scale their ventures and make a meaningful impact.”

SXSW Session Details

- **Title:** *Breaking Barriers, Building Solutions: Meet the Entrepreneurs Transforming Health Innovation*
- **Location:** JW Marriott, 110 E 2nd St, Austin, TX 78701, Salon 1 - 4
- **Date & Time:** Friday, March 13, 11:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

About Reckitt Catalyst: Reckitt Catalyst is a five-year, up to £10m commitment to provide funding, mentorship and expertise from Reckitt leaders and Serena Williams, to enable innovative businesses to scale rapidly and help solve health and hygiene challenges in communities across the world. In partnership with Yunus Social Innovation, Acumen America and Health Innovation

Exchange (HIEx), Reckitt is scaling its existing commitment to support up to 200 women and underrepresented founders over the next five years, across more than 15 countries, including the United States, Nigeria, South Africa, Brazil, Indonesia and Pakistan.

Catalyst builds on Reckitt's existing work to further strengthen its social impact projects around the world with flexible funding and expert mentorship. Since 2020, the company has supported more than 80 entrepreneurs across 15 countries, helping unlock access to better health, clean water and sanitation for two million people.

About Reckitt Catalyst in the U.S.: In partnership with Acumen America, Reckitt Catalyst will support American entrepreneurs, including founders working to improve healthcare access, affordability and reduce disparities in health outcomes, particularly for underserved populations. The collaboration will provide early-stage companies and founders often overlooked by traditional investors with catalytic capital and sector-specific expertise to help their solutions scale quickly. To date, the U.S. cohort consists of five startups, each demonstrating the kind of scalable innovation Catalyst exists to champion.

About Reckitt: Reckitt makes the products people trust to care for the ones they love. We are home to some of the world's best-loved consumer health and hygiene brands, including Dettol, Durex, Finish, Gaviscon, Harpic, Lysol, Mucinex, Nurofen, Strepsils, Vanish and Veet. Consumers are at the heart of everything Reckitt does. By creating innovative, science-backed solutions, Reckitt supports people every day to live healthier lives. Reckitt exists to protect, heal and nurture in the pursuit of a cleaner, healthier world. This commitment goes beyond the products it makes. Through its actions, Reckitt expands access to healthcare, education and economic opportunities. The company supports the planet by reducing waste, conserving resources and driving sustainable innovation. Reckitt believes good health starts at home. With every action it takes, Reckitt strives to make consumers' lives easier, cleaner and healthier, to strengthen communities and to create a more sustainable future.

Find out more or get in touch with us at [Reckitt.com](https://www.Reckitt.com).

About Serena Williams: Serena Williams embodies power, style and global influence. The longest-ranked No. 1 player in tennis history, she won 23 Grand Slam singles titles, four Olympic gold medals and redefined athletic excellence. Today, she is a leading entrepreneur, investor and producer, shaping business, media and culture worldwide as one of the most recognizable figures of our time.

About Acumen America: Acumen America is the leading venture capital firm investing in mission-driven entrepreneurs looking to fix the root causes of America's poverty crisis. The firm believes lasting change requires big, new ideas designed to scale — which is why Acumen America backs founders deeply invested in their communities with the knowledge, context, and trust to improve the lives of people in them. Acumen America is closing capital gaps by investing in these extraordinary entrepreneurs who are building companies that can scale and impact real systems change. Over the last 10+ years Acumen America has invested more than \$26 million across 47 companies which have collectively raised an additional \$1.12 billion in follow-on funding.

Find out more or get in touch with us at [acumenamerica.org/](https://www.acumenamerica.org/).

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