



## DoD HIV/AIDS Prevention Program Status Report:

### Angola



## BACKGROUND

### Introduction/General Information

Estimates of the Angolan population range between 10.5 and 12.5 million people, with life expectancy estimates ranging from 36 to 47 years. Portuguese is the official language of Angola, which has an estimated literacy rate of 42%, disproportionately distributed between men and women. Eighty-five percent of Angola's population relies on subsistence agriculture; the average annual per capita income is \$1,330.

### Country HIV/AIDS Statistics and Risk Factors

HIV/AIDS prevalence estimates for Angola range from 2.8 to 5.5% of the population; testing in specific hot spots reveals prevalence rates as high as 33% in specific groups. Identified significant risk factors include blood transfusions and unprotected sexual contact. Forty-one percent of HIV infections in Angola are attributed to multi-partner heterosexual contact.

### Military HIV/AIDS Information

The Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) is estimated at approximately 110,000. Because the FAA has not conducted force wide testing, HIV prevalence rates are not available but are believed to be 2 to 5 times higher than the civilian population.

## PROPOSED PROGRAM

FAA submitted a plan titled *Prevention and Control of STIs/HIV/AIDS in the Angolan Armed Forces* with the following objectives:

- Determine the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS,
- Develop information and education activities to promote healthy sexual behavior,
- Provide training in clinical syndromic management, and counseling regarding HIV,
- Guarantee the safety of blood and blood products,
- Provide access to and promote condom use, and
- Create a civilian-military alliance to combat HIV/AIDS.

## PROGRAM RESPONSE

### Military-to-Military

DHAPP staff conducted a preliminary needs assessment with members of the FAA in December 2000 and followed up 11 months later at the All-Africa Congress of Military and Police Medical Services held in Luanda, Angola. Supported with funding from DHAPP, the HIV/AIDS Prevention Program Manager for the FAA visited 3 Southern California medical institutions in 2002 to meet and confer with civilian and military HIV/AIDS specialists. DHAPP also procured computers, printers, copiers, fax machines, audiovisual equipment, and funded translation of the *HIV/AIDS Handbook for African Armed Services*, developed by Family Health International, from English to Portuguese. Information in this handbook was used to promote

discussions, provide education and training, and dispel common misconceptions regarding the transmission of HIV.



DHAPP staff met with representatives from the FAA to identify HIV/AIDS prevention program needs.

### **Contractor-Based Assistance**

Charles R. Drew University, Los Angeles, California, received a DHAPP contract in May 2002 titled *Improving Capacity for HIV Prevention in the Angolan Military*. This 12-month contract sought to expand prevention efforts begun by DHAPP by augmenting the number of HIV prevention peer educators, placing a highly skilled epidemiologist in Angola to coordinate HIV prevention efforts, initiating a public information campaign, and by training a cadre of health workers in voluntary counseling and testing (VCT), surveillance, epidemiology, and prevention.



Peer educators trained FAA troops in HIV prevention.

Drew University modified the US Marine Corps HIV prevention curriculum to be culturally relevant to the FAA and provided this material to the Angolan military as a

primary source of HIV/AIDS prevention information. Drew University also trained HIV prevention master trainers, who in turn instructed and supervised a cadre of military HIV peer educators in Angola. Each month, hundreds of FAA personnel now receive HIV/AIDS prevention training from peers.

The Drew University program improved the HIV and STI surveillance capacity, installed teleconferencing equipment, computer hardware and software, and trained the Angolan military medical staff in the use of this equipment.

Drew University's efforts appeared in a front page *New York Times* article describing the impact of AIDS on African militaries. This article also noted the US national security implications of the African AIDS crisis. (Cauvin, H. E. "AIDS Imperiling African Armies, Key to Stability of Many Nations." *New York Times*, November 24, 2002, p. A1). Cauvin reported that the recent end to Angola's civil war allows increased population movement, bringing with it the risk that AIDS will spread quickly to previously isolated sectors.

Drew University received a follow-on contract in FY03 to expand peer educator training and HIV/STI intervention programs with the goal of reaching 16000 FAA troops. In addition, the University placed an epidemiologist in Angola for 6 months to provide on-site training and hands-on experience in VCT, HIV surveillance, epidemiology, and to conduct social marketing of public health. Specifically, billboard ads and brochures were used to launch a mass awareness campaign that emphasized HIV/STI prevention and correct use of condoms.

The principal investigator from Drew University presented the keynote speech at the May 2003 San Diego Epidemiology Exchange highlighting the Angolan Military HIV/AIDS Prevention Program titled *STOP an Epidemic*. The speech detailed the comprehensive approach to HIV prevention.

### **Clinical Provider Training**

DHAPP collaborated with Drew University to gain Fogarty Grants for 4 Angolan physicians to attend a 3-month training program on HIV surveillance methods at the University of California Los Angeles. In addition, 2 FAA physicians received approval to attend the 4-week Military International HIV Training Program in San Diego during the summer of 2003.

### **Interoperability**

DHAPP arranged cooperation with USAID, CDC, the US Embassy country team, and Drew University to ensure that HIV/AIDS prevention resources and efforts ongoing and planned in the general population are made available to Angolan militaries. DHAPP is assisting CDC to establish an office in Angola. DHAPP also provided support and assistance to the All African Congress for HIV in Militaries in Luanda.

## **PROGRAM IMPACT**

### **Master Trainers and Peer Educators**

Drew University trained 6 master trainers and 25 peer educators. The master trainers will instruct additional peer educators and sustain them by ensuring that they have current information and guidance.

### **Number of Troops Trained**

HIV/AIDS prevention programs are ongoing, reaching about 3,000 troops each month, or approximately 36,000 in FY03.

### **Potential Number of Troops Affected**

Drew University's programs should reach the 110,000 active duty forces in Angola by the end of FY04. This does not include recruits who will benefit from programs put in place under DHAPP.

### **Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT)**

Drew University trained FAA military counselors and health workers and employed them to conduct surveillance among 4,000 troops.

**TU DEFENDES ANGOLA...  
COMO TE DEFENDES!  
USE CAMISINHA!**



Poster developed for Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) Program to Fight AIDS. Translated from Portuguese, text at top of poster reads: "You defend Angola as you defend yourself! Use a condom!"

### **Laboratory Capability/Infrastructure**

Supported by DHAPP, Drew University supplied 6,000 HIV test kits, manuals, and materials, and trained laboratory technicians to enhance the laboratory infrastructure and expand HIV diagnosis capabilities.

### **Mass awareness**

Drew University supports a mass awareness campaign that includes public billboards, brochures, media announcements, and promotional activities featuring popular celebrities and community leaders.