

AFGHANISTAN

DHAPP

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HIV/AIDS
PREVENTION PROGRAM

REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF HIV/AIDS
AMONG UNIFORMED PERSONNEL IN
SELECTED AFRICAN NATIONS AND BEYOND

WINNING BATTLES IN THE WAR AGAINST HIV/AIDS

BACKGROUND

Country Statistics

The population of Afghanistan is estimated at 29.9 million, with an average life expectancy of 42.9 years. Pashto and Dari are the official languages of Afghanistan, which has a literacy rate of 36%. Literacy is much higher for men (51%) than for women (21%). Starting in 1973, Afghanistan has endured decades of conflict and instability. Following the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Afghanistan has entered a process of physical and political reconstruction. The annual per capita income is estimated at \$800.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the general population is estimated to be 0.01%. The number of people living with HIV/AIDS in Afghanistan is unknown. Little is known about the factors that influence the spread of HIV/AIDS in Afghanistan. The main modes of transmission are believed to be intravenous drug use and blood transfusions.

Military Statistics

No reliable estimates are currently available for the size of the military forces in Afghanistan. As of this annual report, no information regarding HIV prevalence in the military was available.



PROGRAM RESPONSE

Military-to-Military Technical Assistance

DHAPP staff provided technical assistance to the Afghan National Army (ANA) during an in-country assist visit 27–31 August 2005. The purpose of this trip was to meet with the US Central Command, Office of Security Cooperation Afghanistan (OSCA) and ANA Office of the Surgeon General representatives to discuss the Afghanistan HIV/AIDS proposal, and to provide education on funding streams and future HIV/AIDS prevention opportunities within the ANA.



Key components of the DHAPP program were

discussed, and DHAPP staff met with the Surgeon General, Deputy Surgeon General, and Directors of Policy & Planning, Laboratory, Blood Bank, Medical Services, and Infectious Disease Clinic. DHAPP staff also met with ANA students who were sent to the June 2005 Thailand Regional Training Center *HIV/AIDS Treatment and Care Workshop* to discuss what they had learned and passed on to their peers and leadership.



The ANA plans to work closely with OSCA during development of an HIV/AIDS prevention program. The program intentions are to develop a military strategic HIV/AIDS plan; HIV/AIDS policy in military personnel; a knowledge, attitudes, and practices survey, and educational materials; and conduct a survey to determine the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the ANA.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Prevention/Care/Treatment

DHAPP has continued to work with Afghan military officials and US Embassy personnel to commence the establishment of a comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention/education program. During fiscal year 2005, funding was sent to Afghanistan to support the travel of 2 Afghan military physicians and 1 interpreter to the Regional Training Center in Bangkok, Thailand. Other funding is slated to be sent for commencement of the ANA program. DHAPP staff members traveled to Afghanistan in August 2005 to assist with the logistics of the start of their program.