



BELIZE

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 Belize is estimated at 279,500, with an average life expectancy of 67.5 years. English is the official language of Belize. Literacy is about 94%, evenly distributed between men and women. In recent decades, Belize's economy has been transformed, with the service sector overtaking agriculture, fishing, and forestry. Annual per capita income is estimated at \$6,500.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the general population is estimated to be 2.4%, the highest HIV rate in the Central American region. Belize has an estimated 3600 people living with HIV/AIDS. Most people living with HIV/AIDS in Belize are 20–29 years old. Almost 50% of the reported cases are women. Among those tested for HIV, women were infected at a younger age than men, which has serious implications for women in their reproductive years. HIV in Belize is largely transmitted through heterosexual contact, but mother-to-child transmission is also important. The epidemic is generalized and affects both urban and rural populations.

Military Statistics

The size of the armed forces in Belize is approximately 1000. As of this annual report, no information regarding HIV prevalence in the military was available.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

Belize received funding late in 2005, so the majority of the assistance effort will be conducted in 2006. Significant work has been planned with the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine.

Proposed Future Activities

A proposal was received on behalf of the military of Belize for the 2006 fiscal year. The overall goal of the proposed project is to develop a comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention

program for the armed forces in Belize. Specific objectives of the proposed project include conducting a mass awareness campaign, conducting pre- and post-behavioral change surveys, developing a counseling and testing program, improving sexually transmitted infection management, conducting a condom distribution and availability program, and hosting a multi-sectoral HIV/AIDS workshop.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Prevention/Care/Treatment

Current efforts in HIV/AIDS prevention projects for military members in Belize are being undertaken by the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) as part of a collaborative agreement between DHAPP and USUHS. Toward the end of FY05, DHAPP funding was released to the implementing partner for commencement of activities and limited early data have been collected.

By the end of the fiscal year, 800 troops had been reached with prevention messages that focused on abstinence and/or being faithful. Eight troops or family members had been provided with HIV-related palliative care, including care for TB.

One indigenous organization was provided with technical assistance for HIV-related policy development and institutional capacity building. The Center for Disaster & Humanitarian Assistance Medicine (CDHAM) was successful in gaining the support of the leadership with forward progress in coordination/communication improving considerably over the quarter. Coordination/collaboration with and between the US Military Liaison Office (USMLO), US Agency for International Development (USAID), and national agencies continues to develop in a positive direction. Direct planning and execution of projects are in the coordination stages.