BOTSWANA

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

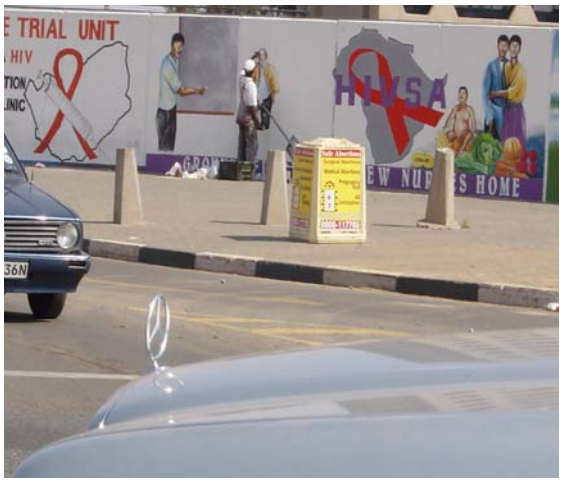
BACKGROUND

Country Statistics

The population of Botswana is estimated at 1.6 million, with an average life expectancy of 33.9 years, down significantly from a high of 67 years prior to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. English is the official language of the country, which has an in-country literacy rate of 80%. Botswana has a stable, democratic government and a large, well-developed public health care infrastructure. One of the most prosperous countries in Africa, its high rate of economic growth is fueled by diamond mining and tourism. Financial services, subsistence farming, and cattle raising are other key sectors of the economy. The annual per capita income is $9,200.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the general population is estimated to be 37.3%, one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world. However, the HIV epidemic in Botswana appears to be stabilizing. The number of people living with HIV/AIDS is approximately 350,000. Identified risk factors include high-risk heterosexual contact with mVultiple partners, widespread poverty, in-country migration, and lack of care and treatment for sexually transmitted infections. Heterosexual contact is the principal mode of transmission. More than 6% of children in the country, aged 18 months to 4 years, are estimated to be HIV positive, most of whom are likely due to mother-to-child transmission.



Military Statistics

The Botswana Defense Force (BDF) is estimated at 9000 active-duty personnel. As of this annual report, no information regarding HIV prevalence in the military was available. However, it is estimated at 40%, slightly higher than the general population.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

Military-to-Military Technical Assistance

DHAPP staff provided technical assistance to the BDF, which included a site visit to the BDF Counseling and Testing (CT) center and laboratory, 8–9 August 2005. The purpose of the trip was to meet with country team members including representatives from the Office of Defense Cooperation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and US Embassy and BDF medical staffs, and to discuss plans for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief 2006 Country Operational Plan (COP).

The current status of the BDF program, equipment, and training needs for the CT center and laboratory and areas of program expansion that the BDF would like supported were discussed. The visit ended with all parties agreeing on final plans to further investigate equipment and laboratory training, and to develop the upcoming September COP.

Foreign Military Financing Activities

Botswana was awarded Foreign Military Financing funding for the acquisition of needed laboratory and medical equipment. Currently, the BDF and US Embassy representatives have negotiated and planned with DHAPP staff members to purchase CD4 counters to outfit 4 laboratory facilities in the BDF.

Proposed Future Activities

As a PEPFAR focus country, the military of Botswana submitted a comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment proposal to the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) via their PEPFAR country team's overall COP. Military activities for FY06 were approved by technical and program review committees at OGAC, as well as by agency principals, and these will commence in the new fiscal year.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Prevention/Care/Treatment

DHAPP staff members have maintained contact and collaborative interaction with military officials and US Embassy staff in Botswana to plan to expand their established comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention/education program for military members in their country. As of the end of FY05, DHAPP desk officers have maintained active roles as mem-

bers of the Botswana country core team at the OGAC, providing support to the country team in its implementation of PEPFAR funding. During FY05, no military-specific proposal for continued assistance has been received specifically for DHAPP consideration. However, military activities were included in the Emergency Plan Country Operational Plan request this year, and DHAPP desk officers acted as reviewers in this process to ensure military members were represented in the plan. DHAPP looks forward to continuing collaborative efforts with the BDF in FY06.