

ETHIOPIA

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 Ethiopia is estimated to be 73 million, with an average life expectancy of 48.8 years; the latter has been significantly affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Amharic and English are the official languages; the estimated literacy rate is 42.7%, disproportionately distributed between men and women. The Ethiopian economy is primarily agricultural, accounting for half of the gross domestic product and 80% of total employment. Annual per capita income is \$800.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV/AIDS prevalence estimate is 4.4%, and the number of people believed to be living with HIV/AIDS is 1.5 million. AIDS already accounts for about one third of all young adult deaths in the country. Identified risk factors include unprotected sexual contact, blood transfusions, unsafe injections, and perinatal transmission. Eighty-eight percent of all transmissions are acquired through heterosexual contact. The epidemic is concentrated mainly in urban areas. Individuals aged 15–24 years are more severely affected than other age groups.

Military Statistics

The National Defense Force of Ethiopia (NDFE) is estimated at approximately 350,000. HIV prevalence in the NDFE is estimated at 7%.



PROGRAM RESPONSE

Military-to-Military Technical Assistance

DHAPP staff met with the NDFE program manager and US Embassy Security Assistance Officer to discuss current US Department of Defense (DoD) activities and fiscal year 2006 Country Operational Plan (COP) plans, during an in-country assist visit 10–12 August 2005.

DHAPP staff reviewed blueprints for the Blood Center and Counseling and Testing (CT) Center renovations, and discussed planning for the Blood Safety Program. Blueprints for the Blood Center will be reviewed in San Diego and a new spreadsheet will be used to track funding and expenditures.

In addition, DHAPP staff provided technical assistance to the NDFE during the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Core Team visit 22–26 August 2005.

Group discussions centered on working toward having all aspects of the prevention, care, and treatment activities in a seamless network model working from the hospital to the health center and then the community level (and vice versa). The COP was reviewed, there was a small group discussion on strategic information, and the roles of each partner were identified. One of the major projects being undertaken is the development of a Blood Safety Program for the military including the renovation for a blood donation center, provision of blood testing equipment, set up of training curriculum and plan, and computer tracking of blood products.

Plans for DoD-specific follow-up visits are anticipated once the renovation on the Blood Center and CT at Bella Hospital are under way. This is expected to take place after 1 January 2006.



Foreign Military Financing Assistance

Ethiopia was awarded Foreign Military Financing funding for the acquisition of laboratory and medical equipment. This funding was awarded during FY03, and was released for expenditure during this fiscal year. Plans to purchase Blood Bank equipment with this funding are under way.

Proposed Future Activities

As a PEPFAR focus country, the NDFE submitted a comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment proposal to the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) via the/its 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

The NDFE supports prevention of mother-to-child transmission activities specifically located in 2 service outlets, located at the Air Force Hospital and the Bella Defense Referral Hospital. During FY05, 450 pregnant women received Prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) services there, and 14 were started on antiretroviral therapy (ART) prophylaxis. In addition, 5 health workers were trained in the provision of PMTCT services according to national or international standards.

Care

The NDFE supported 1 service outlet for care services for HIV-infected troops and their families. During FY05, the Bella Defense Referral Hospital provided tuberculosis care for 7 HIV-infected patients.

Counseling and Testing

One CT Center was supported by the NDFE at Bella Defense Referral Hospital. During FY05, 99 soldiers were tested for HIV and received their results.

Treatment

The NDFE supports 1 service outlet for ART, at the Air Force Hospital. During FY05, 6 children and 8 adults newly initiated therapy there. By the end of the fiscal year, 300 adults, 6 children, and 14 pregnant women had ever received ART at this site. Five health care workers were trained during FY05 to provide ART.

