



## NICARAGUA

# 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 Nicaragua is estimated to be 5.5 million people, with an average life expectancy of 70.33 years. Spanish is the official language, and the in-country literacy rate is estimated at 67.5%. Nicaragua is struggling to overcome the consequences of dictatorship, civil war, and natural calamities, which have made it one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. Lacking substantial mineral resources, Nicaragua has traditionally relied on agricultural exports to sustain its economy. The annual per capita income is approximately \$2,300.

#### HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the general population is estimated at 0.2%, the lowest rate in Central America. Approximately 6400 people in Nicaragua are living with HIV/AIDS. Most cases occur among individuals aged 20–39 years. Men are more severely affected than women, with a male-to-female ratio of 3:1, but infection rates among women are growing. Sexual transmission accounts for most (86%) of the cases. The main vulnerable groups are men who have sex with men and commercial sex workers.

#### Military Statistics

The size of the armed forces is approximately 16,000. As of this annual report, no information regarding HIV prevalence in the military was available.

### PROGRAM RESPONSE

#### In-Country Ongoing Assistance

Nicaragua 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 Nicaraguan military 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 Nicaragua. Some specific objectives of the proposed project

include developing a train-the-trainer program, developing a stigma and discrimination reduction program, establishing a sexually transmitted infection management program, establishing a counseling and testing program, training medical staff, enhancing laboratory capabilities, and conducting a condom distribution program.

## **OUTCOMES & IMPACT**

### **Prevention/Care/Treatment**

Current efforts in HIV/AIDS prevention projects for military members in Nicaragua 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 the current reporting period, DHAPP funding was released to the implementing partner for commencement of activities. DHAPP looks forward to the start of the program in Nicaragua and forthcoming results.

