



**SURINAME**

**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 Suriname is estimated at 438,100 people, with an average life expectancy of 69 years. Dutch is the official language, and the in-country literacy rate is estimated at 88%. Since gaining independence in 1975, Suriname has had to contend with a series of coups and a civil war. The economy is dominated by the alumina industry, which accounts for more than 15% of the gross domestic product and 70% of export earnings. Prospects for local onshore oil production are good, with an oil drilling program under way. Annual per capita income is estimated at \$4,300.

#### **HIV/AIDS Statistics**

The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the general population is estimated to be 1.7%. Suriname has an estimated 5200 people living with HIV/AIDS. Relatively little is known about the factors that influence the spread of HIV/AIDS in Suriname. Heterosexual contact is thought to be the principal mode of HIV transmission. Prevalence among commercial sex workers is estimated at 22%.

#### **Military Statistics**

The size of the armed forces in Suriname is approximately 2,000. As of this annual report, no information regarding HIV prevalence in the military was available.

### **PROGRAM RESPONSE**

#### **Military-to-Military Technical Assistance**

DHAPP staff members maintained early collaborative contact with US Embassy staff in Suriname and with collaborating partners. Program development and implementation, logistics, and proposal planning were undertaken by the collaborative team in coordination with the Suriname military.

#### **In-Country Ongoing Assistance**

Suriname 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 Suriname 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 Suriname. Specific objectives of the proposed project include conducting a mass awareness campaign, conducting pre- and post-behavior change surveys, developing a counseling and testing program, developing laboratory infrastructure, conducting a condom distribution and availability program, and hosting a multi-sectoral HIV/AIDS workshop.

## **OUTCOMES & IMPACT**

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

Throughout FY05, DHAPP has continued to work with Suriname military officials and US Embassy personnel to commence the establishment of a comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention/education program. Early efforts have yielded preliminary results.

One indigenous organization was provided with technical assistance for HIV-related policy development and institutional capacity building. The Center for Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance Medicine was successful in gaining the support of host nation leadership, evidenced by the development of a 3-member coordination committee that was formed at the conclusion of an important meeting with the military leadership, military medical staff, national HIV/AIDS program representative, and other representatives from the United States and Suriname. The action occurred within 1 day after the conclusion of a Traditional Command Activity-sponsored HIV/AIDS program workshop. Coordination/ collaboration efforts with and between the US Security Assistance Office, US Political/Economics Officer (also the HIV/AIDS Program Action Officer), and national and international agencies continue to develop in a very positive direction. Direct program support to the Suriname military is rapidly increasing through long-distance program support. A technical visit is planned in December.