



ZIMBABWE

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 Zimbabwe is estimated to be 12.7 million people, with an average life expectancy of 39.1 years, down significantly from a high of 60 years prior to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. English is the official language, with an estimated literacy rate of 90.7%. The economy is dominated by agriculture and services, with agriculture employing 66% of the workforce. Unemployment is very high and in recent years, the country has endured rampant inflation and critical food and fuel shortages. Annual per capita income is estimated to be \$1,900.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in Zimbabwe is one of the highest in the world. The prevalence rate in the general population has been reported to be 24.6%, with 1.8 million people living with HIV/AIDS. Over the past 5 years, there is evidence that HIV rates have decreased. Heterosexual intercourse has been identified as the most common mode of HIV transmission. Vulnerable groups include military personnel and commercial sex workers. Young adults in the 25–29 age group are more severely affected than other age groups. Women are more severely affected than men.

Military Statistics

The size of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) has been estimated at 40,000 active-duty personnel. The ZDF has not performed forcewide screening; however, HIV prevalence in the military is estimated to be higher than in the civilian population.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

Military-to-Military Technical Assistance

DHAPP staff members maintained early collaborative contact with US Embassy staff in Zimbabwe and with collaborating partners. Program development and implementation, logistics, and proposal planning were undertaken by the collaborative team in coordination with the ZDF, and a technical assist in-country visit is planned for fiscal year 2006.

Proposed Future Activities

A proposal was received on behalf of the military of Zimbabwe for FY06. The specific objectives of the proposed project include establishing a train-the-trainer program, training medical personnel in management of HIV/AIDS and opportunistic infections, enhancing laboratory infrastructure, and expanding the counseling and testing (CT) program.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Prevention

Because funding was received late in the fiscal year, data have only begun to be collected. However, several targeted goals were met for the implementation of future programs. Thirty military members were trained to be peer educators for a comprehensive prevention program for troops and families. Forty other personnel were trained in the necessary computer software for data entry, collection, and reporting requirements. Twelve condom service outlets were supported.

Care

Three service outlets were supported that provided CT services. During FY05, 210 troops were tested for HIV and received their results (127 men, 83 women). In addition, 2 portable buildings were procured and renovations planned for additional service outlets. Equipment for these centers was also procured (computers, office supplies).

Treatment

The ZDF supported 3 service outlets that provided antiretroviral therapy (ART) to military patients and their families. During FY06, 1466 patients were provided with ART (974 adult men, 489 adult women, 2 boys, 1 girl). Three laboratories had the capability to provide HIV and/or CD4 testing.

In addition, during October and November 2004, the Zimbabwean military sent 2 physicians to the *Military International HIV/AIDS Training Program* in San Diego. They were provided with training in prevention, CT, care, and treatment methods, as well as policy development and capacity building. Participants relayed positive feedback from the course and stated that they felt it would enhance their ability to establish prevention, care, and treatment programs for HIV in their country.

