



## **BARBADOS**

# **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 Barbados is estimated to be 279,900 people, with an average life expectancy of 75.3 years. English is the official language of Barbados, which has an estimated literacy rate of 99.7%, evenly distributed between men and women. The gross domestic product per capita is \$17,300. Historically, the Barbadian economy had been dependent on sugarcane cultivation and related activities, but production in recent years has diversified into light industry and tourism. Growth was positive in 2005.

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

The HIV prevalence rate in the Barbadian general population is estimated at 1.5%, with approximately 2500 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Most cases of HIV in Barbados are attributed to unprotected heterosexual contact.

#### **Military Statistics**

The Royal Barbados Defense Force (RBDF) consists of approximately 1000 personnel distributed among the Ground Forces and the Coast Guard. The Defense Force is responsible for national security and can be employed to maintain public order in times of crisis, emergency, or other specific need. The percentage of the Barbados GPD expended for a military purpose is unknown. Military HIV prevalence rates are unknown.

### **PROGRAM RESPONSE**

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

The Center for Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance Medicine (CDHAM), implementing agency for the United States Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences traveled to Barbados in February 2006 to meet with members of the RBDF and the National AIDS Council to discuss progress for the April 2006 *Regional Caribbean HIV/AIDS Conference*.

#### **Proposed Future Activities**

DHAPP received a proposal from CDHAM on behalf of the RBDF for activities in fiscal year 2007. Stated goals for the upcoming fiscal year included the following: train 30 master trainers, 10 peer educators, and 27 counselors for counseling and testing; implement troop-level HIV/AIDS prevention education and behavior change communication training; provide infrastructure and equipment for HIV testing centers; increase access to testing for

all military personnel; develop HIV laboratory diagnostic capability, including training 8 laboratory personnel in HIV, sexually transmitted infection, and tuberculosis diagnostics, quality assurance, and additional laboratory management requirements; increase clinical capability for health care of those infected with HIV; and establish effective monitoring and evaluation procedures. The proposal was reviewed by a scientific panel and will be presented to the DHAPP Board of Directors.

## **OUTCOMES & IMPACT**

### **Prevention**

Over the fiscal year, 800 RBDF troops (725 men, 75 women) were reached with prevention messages focusing on abstinence and/or being faithful. In addition, 500 T-shirts were distributed to and worn on World AIDS Day 2005 by RBDF members.

In April 2006, the RBDF and CDHAM co-sponsored a 4-day training session on HIV/AIDS for uniformed services in Eastern Caribbean and English-speaking Central American countries. Forty-three military participants were trained in initiation and strengthening of regional dialogue on HIV/AIDS in the defense environment, assistance in the development of national prevention programs, and strengthening of civilian–military collaboration. The event outcome was a greater understanding of stigma and discrimination issues and reduction activities, community involvement, health and psychosocial issues related to HIV/AIDS, and the early development and refinement of policy development.

In addition, 10,000 condoms were ordered through Pharmaco (a local distributor in the Caribbean) and will be delivered to the Military Liaison Office for delivery to the RBDF.

