

HONDURAS

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 Honduras is estimated to be 7.3 million people, with an average life expectancy of 69.3 years. Spanish is the official language of Honduras, which has an estimated literacy rate of 76.2%, evenly distributed between men and women. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is \$2,900, with 53% of the population of Honduras living below the poverty line. Growth remains dependent on the economy of the United States, its largest trading partner, on continued exports of nontraditional agricultural products (e.g., melons, chiles, tilapia, and shrimp), and on reduction of the high crime rate.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in the Honduras general population is estimated at 1.5%. Honduras accounts for almost 60% of HIV/AIDS cases in Central America and occupies the fifth place in the official number of total cases on the American continent. In 2005, there were more than 79,000 cases, according to national estimates using the GOALS model, which links program goals and resource allocation levels. Sex is the transmission route for 93% of the total number of cases reported, mother-to-child transmission accounts for 6.5%, and blood transmission represents 0.5%.



Military Statistics

The Honduran Armed Forces (FAH) consists of approximately 8000 troops. Primary tasking is to defend the nation's borders and provide support to the civil authorities as needed. Honduras allocates 2.55% of the GDP for the military. As of this annual report, no information regarding HIV prevalence in the military was available, but a 1997 study found a prevalence of 6.8% among military recruits. There is some knowledge of HIV/AIDS within the military even though there is not a formal training program in place. The FAH does not have a strategic plan, written policies, or programs for military members and their families.

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, conducted an initial needs assessment in Honduras in 2004, with recent follow-on visits to discuss logistics of their proposal to DHAPP.

CDHAM continued work toward a coordinated/collaborative effort with the FAH and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Regional Office to further develop like projects to support the military. Military representatives from Latin America and the Caribbean and civilian representatives from national and international agencies met in November to discuss HIV/AIDS within the armed forces. As the momentum builds, a continued positive outcome is the ongoing support of the United Nations Population Fund in identifying needs and offering assistance in the planning of future activities to support the FAH.

Proposed Future Activities

DHAPP received two proposals on behalf of the FAH for fiscal year 2007 activities. The first, from CDHAM, included the following objectives: implement services related to sexual and reproductive health in the military units and the military hospital, incorporate the policies on safe pregnancy and the prevention of the vertical transmission, and strengthen FAH capacity for promotion of sexual and reproductive health and prevention of HIV in the camp garrison.

The second proposal, received from EngenderHealth, emphasized the following objectives: train 25 docents to provide education and behavior change communication to 600 cadets; train 25 FAH master trainers to provide educational workshops on gender and HIV to 10 troops each, reaching 30% of the community; and improve the quality of HIV health services in 10 military clinics by increasing access to counseling and testing.

Both proposals were reviewed by a scientific review board and will be submitted to the DHAPP Board of Directors for funding decisions.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Prevention

CDHAM has worked to gain the support of the leadership, including providing technical assistance to one indigenous organization (the FAH) in the areas of capacity building and policy development. However, toward the end of the current reporting period, momentum in these efforts was slowed, due to a variety of significant personnel issues and competing activities for collaborators. CDHAM continues its diligent work to reestablish momentum with increased trust and growing support for the program at the highest levels in the FAH.

