



## MADAGASCAR

# 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 Madagascar is estimated to be 18.6 million people, with an average life expectancy of 57.3 years. French and Malagasy are the official languages of Madagascar, which has an estimated literacy rate of 68.9%, unevenly distributed between men and women. Agriculture, which includes fishing and forestry, is a mainstay of the economy, accounts for more than one fourth of Madagascar's gross domestic product (GDP), and employs 80% of the population. The GDP per capita is \$900, with 50% of Malagasy people living below the poverty level.

#### HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in the general population of Madagascar is estimated at 0.5%, with approximately 49,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Most cases of HIV in Madagascar are spread through multi-partner heterosexual sex.

#### Military Statistics

The Malagasy Armed Forces (MAF) is estimated at approximately 21,000 members. Madagascar allocates 7.2% of the GDP for military expenditures. No HIV/AIDS prevalence data were available for the armed forces.

### PROGRAM RESPONSE

#### In-Country Ongoing Assistance

Past collaborative efforts with the MAF have resulted in the following early accomplishments: new safety precautions are now taken during blood transfusions; 600 blood packets have been tested at the military hospital; an awareness campaign was conducted in 50 military dispensaries, reaching 2500 military members and their families; a plea was made to the military hierarchy to support the fight against HIV/AIDS in the MAF; and a policy was drafted and implemented on counselling and testing for military members, eventually leading to mandatory testing.

#### Foreign Military Financing Assistance

Madagascar was awarded Foreign Military Financing funding for the acquisition of laboratory and medical equipment. This award was allocated for fiscal year 2005 and has not been released yet for expenditure. Although still in negotiation, the plan is to use these funds to procure HIV diagnostic equipment and supplies.

### Proposed Future Activities

DHAPP received a proposal from the MAF for activities in FY07. The primary objectives are to develop a plan to educate the entire military on HIV prevention, develop a strategy for a military outreach program to educate the populace in outlying provincial regions, educate military leaders, improve sanitary conditions and proper procedures in clinics and hospitals for blood transfusions, and improve transportation, training, and facilities dedicated to HIV prevention activities.

The proposal was reviewed by a scientific panel and will be presented to the DHAPP Board of Directors.

## OUTCOMES & IMPACT

### Prevention

The MAF reported initial success in its prevention programs during the first quarter of FY06. Reporting data were not received after the first quarter. During the first quarter, 989 military members were reached with comprehensive prevention messages, and 10 medical officers were trained to provide these messages. These health care providers, who work at military health installations around Madagascar, went on to provide mass sensitization activities in their respective regions. In addition, condoms were provided to the MAF. While no exact number of beneficiaries and specific sites have been reported, a general total of 13,120 condoms were distributed to military dispensaries in the 7 areas of most concern. In addition, 9 military dispensaries in outlying areas in Madagascar were provided with medical equipment/supplies, such as sterilizers and disposable syringes, to promote sanitation and hygiene efforts. Fourteen (14) military members were trained in injection safety.

### Other

The Central Director of Health Department for the Ministry of Defense, who is also the general coordinator of all military HIV/AIDS activities, attended a 1-week HIV/AIDS conference, offered by the Defense Institute for Medical Operations, San Antonio, Texas, in December 2005. The conference provided him with knowledge to better manage HIV/AIDS prevention, especially evaluation.

