



NICARAGUA

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 Nicaragua is estimated to be 5.5 million people, with an average life expectancy of 70.6 years. Spanish is the official language of Nicaragua, which has an estimated literacy rate of 67.5%, evenly distributed between men and women. One of the Western Hemisphere's poorest countries, Nicaragua has a low per capita income, widespread underemployment, and a heavy external debt burden. Distribution of income is one of the most unequal on the globe. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is \$2,900, with 50% of the population living below the poverty line.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in the general population of Nicaragua is estimated at 0.2%, with approximately 7300 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Even though Nicaragua has a relatively low incidence of HIV, infection rates among women are growing. Housewives are increasingly affected, rating higher than female sex workers. Over 60% of people living with HIV/AIDS are between the ages of 15 and 34 years. Nicaragua's epidemic is spread primarily through heterosexual activity.

Military Statistics

The Nicaraguan Army (NA) is estimated at approximately 14,500 active-duty members. Eighty percent of the NA population is 18–35 years old, approximately 99% of whom are male. Nicaragua expends 0.7% of its GDP for military purposes. Military HIV prevalence rates are unknown.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

In August 2004, the Center for Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance/Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (CDHAM/USUHS) collaborated with DHAPP to conduct an assessment visit to identify NA needs. Subsequent engagement has taken place to move forward in planning and executing the approved projects to enhance HIV/AIDS prevention program activities. Multiple contacts were established and coordinated in order to develop the program within the NA.

Proposed Future Activities

DHAPP received a proposal from CDHAM/USUHS, on behalf of the NA, for activities in fiscal year 2007. The primary objectives of the proposal included establish a net of military health

promoters to systematically support the national program guidelines for the prevention of AIDS; implement a permanent Information, Education, and Communication campaign for units dislocated along the entire route of the Pan-American Road, as well as land and sea (Army and Navy) border posts distributed throughout the country; implement a permanent campaign for counseling and testing (CT); and offer CT services sexual and reproductive health services for military members and families.

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

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

DHAPP has continued its collaborative interaction with the US Southern Command and CDHAM/USUHS as implementing partners for future activities in the Nicaraguan Army. No programmatic activities took place in the NA during the current reporting period. DHAPP looks forward to future collaboration with Nicaragua.

