

SWAZILAND

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 the Swaziland is estimated to be 1.13 million people, with an average life expectancy of 32.6 years. English and siSwati are the official languages of Swaziland, which has an estimated literacy rate of 81.6%, evenly distributed between men and women. In this small, landlocked economy, subsistence agriculture occupies more than 80% of the population. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is \$5,000, with 69% of people in Swaziland living below the poverty line.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

Swaziland recently surpassed Botswana as the country with the world's highest known rates of HIV/AIDS infection. The HIV prevalence rate in the Swaziland general population is estimated at 33.4%, resulting in approximately 220,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. The primary identified risk factors in the population are high mobility, high-risk heterosexual contact with multiple partners and commercial sex workers, gender inequity, and high incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Military Statistics

The Umbutfo Swaziland Defense Force (USDF) is estimated at approximately 3500 members. Swaziland allocates 1.4% of the GDP for military expenditures. No HIV prevalence data are currently available for USDF members.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

The USDF has developed an ongoing prevention and care program for its military members and their families in collaboration with DHAPP and other partners. Through early efforts, troop-level education and increased access to counseling and testing (CT) services have been focused activities.

In addition, DHAPP staff traveled to Swaziland during the fiscal year to provide technical assistance regarding their military prevention, care, and treatment targets in the context of the larger country operational plan.

Foreign Military Financing Assistance

Swaziland was awarded Foreign Military Financing funding for the acquisition of laboratory

and medical equipment. This award was allocated for fiscal years 2003 and 2005, and has not yet been released 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 Population Services International on behalf of the USDF for activities in FY07. The primary objectives were: increase the number of master trainers and peer educators trained among military personnel; adapt and implement new behavior change communication materials from the established *Bridges of Hope* curriculum; reduce stigma of HIV prevention topics by adapting and implementing two programs already proven in Southern Africa, including the *Trusted Partner* campaign and *Remember Eliphaz* from the Namibian military; provide rapid HIV and STI testing kits to military CT centers; establish a mobile CT program; and develop monitoring and evaluation procedures for the entire program.

The proposal was reviewed by a scientific review board and will be submitted to the DHAPP Board of Directors for funding decisions.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Prevention

The USDF reported impressive ongoing results in their comprehensive program. During the fiscal year, 322 soldiers and their families were reached with prevention messages focused on abstinence and/or being faithful (291 men, 31 women). Nine (9) military members were trained in the provision of these messages. Sixty-six (66) USDF personnel were reached with comprehensive prevention messages, and another 240 were trained in the provision of these messages. The USDF supported 38 condom service outlets. Sixty-four (64) military medical personnel were trained in both blood and injection safety.



Care and Treatment

One (1) service outlet provided HIV-related palliative care services to USDF personnel and their families. Called Phocweni Clinic, it provides clinical prophylaxis for opportunistic infections and provides treatment for tuberculosis once the client has been diagnosed at the government hospital. With the upgrading of the Phocweni laboratory and x-ray departments, clients will be diagnosed by USDF medical personnel, which will reduce delays in treatment. During the fiscal year, 34 military personnel were provided with HIV-related palliative care (31 men, 3 women), and another 18 were trained to provide HIV-related palliative care.

Three (3) outlets provided CT services for military personnel. During the year, 284 military members were tested for HIV and received their results (242 men, 42 women). During the year, one (1) USDF medical provider was trained in provision of antiretroviral therapy.