



ANGOLA

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

Since the end of a 27-year civil war in 2002, Angola has been making efforts to rebuild the country's infrastructure and move forward as a democratic society. The estimated Angolan population is 12.5 million people, with a life expectancy of 38 years, one of the lowest in the world. Portuguese is the official language of Angola, which has an estimated literacy rate of 67%, with even distribution between men and women. Oil production and its supporting activities account for about 85% of the gross domestic product (GDP). Increased oil production supported growth averaging more than 15% per year from 2004 to 2007. Subsistence agriculture provides the main livelihood for most of the population, but half of the country's food must still be imported. The GDP per capita is \$5,600, with 70% of Angolans living below the poverty level.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in Angola's general population is estimated at 3.7% among adults 15–49 years of age. Angola has approximately 320,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Most recent HIV data collected from antenatal clinics show that HIV prevalence among pregnant women did not significantly change between 2004 and 2005. It is estimated that the median national HIV prevalence was 2.4% and 2.5% in 2004 and 2005, respectively. Identified significant risk factors include blood transfusions and unprotected sexual contact. Most cases of HIV in Angola are spread through multi-partner heterosexual sex.

Military Statistics

The Angolan Armed Forces (AAF) comprises an estimated 110,000 personnel. Three branches make up the AAF: Army, Navy, and the National Air Force. Angola allocates 5.7% of the GDP on military expenditures. In 2003, the Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science conducted a military prevalence study and estimated rates of seroprevalence at 3% to 11%, depending on location. HIV prevalence rates are highest near the border of Namibia (11%).



PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

The AAF has continued its efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS in collaboration with the Drew Center for AIDS Research, Education and Services (Drew CARES). They continue to make exceptional progress with their current prevention program, while breaking ground with new efforts to reach more of the AAF and beginning to provide services for HIV care and treatment.

Foreign Military Financing Assistance

Angola was awarded Foreign Military Financing funding for the acquisition of laboratory equipment, supporting reagents, and other supplies related to the diagnosis and treatment of HIV/AIDS. This award was appropriated for FY03 and FY04, and FY03 funding was released for expenditure during FY05. To date, FY03 funding has been used to procure a CD4 counter, viral load analyzer, and supporting supplies and reagents. FY04 funding should be released for expenditure shortly, and the current proposal for these funds includes procuring CD4 counters for additional facilities.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Prevention

This year, Charles Drew University focused its efforts on the development of teams of properly trained educators who could rapidly increase the number of activists. AAF peacekeepers who have been mobilized abroad have benefitted from comprehensive prevention messages. These are particularly important activities since Angola's role in maintaining regional stability is growing in importance, and AAF members are exposed to the social environment of neighboring countries where HIV rates range from 22% to 38%. A total of 465 peer educators have continued to train their fellow troops. They have reached approximately 10,000 troops with their comprehensive prevention messages. In addition to standard training, a subset of peer educators received training on how to play an HIV prevention card game. This interactive game is called *Lunguka!* and was developed by researchers at Charles Drew University. The game incorporates the characters and HIV prevention messages from a popular HIV prevention comic book (already in print). This game can be used as a tool to motivate troops to learn more about HIV. Currently, Charles Drew University is evaluating the game's efficacy as a teaching tool and its popularity among the AAF. To further their work, Charles Drew University created an HIV Prevention Radio Program aimed at the AAF. It will be nationally aired twice a week during the "military hour" from December 2007 to February 2008. This program will not only have an impact on the AAF, but the general civilian population as well.



Other

With technical assistance from Charles Drew University, the Health Branch of the AAF is developing a program to implement program monitoring and evaluation across the country. It has already centralized its database in order to make the information available to more personnel at a much quicker pace. Discussions are underway to develop a data collection and analysis program for the AAF's Department of Preventive Medicine. This would include training

personnel and resource acquisition. Trained personnel would be skilled in questionnaire development, implementation, and basic data analyses. This training would allow the AAF to collect regular HIV behavioral and serosurveillance data among its personnel throughout the country, and to improve its capacity to treat and prevent infections.

Proposed Future Activities

DHAPP received a proposal from Charles Drew University for FY08. Proposed activities include continuing prevention education, increasing counseling and testing capabilities, and training medical staff on antiretroviral therapy services for the AAF.

