



**GHANA**

**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 estimated population of Ghana is 23 million people, with an average life expectancy of 59 years. English is the official language of Ghana, which has an estimated literacy rate of 58%, unevenly distributed between men and women. Well endowed with natural resources, Ghana has roughly twice the per capita output of the poorer countries in West Africa. Gold, timber, and cocoa production are major sources of foreign exchange. The domestic economy continues to revolve around subsistence agriculture, which accounts for 34% of the gross domestic product (GDP). The GDP per capita is \$1,400, with 29% of Ghanaian people living below the poverty level.

#### **HIV/AIDS Statistics**

The HIV prevalence rate in the general population of Ghana is estimated at 2.3%, with approximately 320,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Identified risk factors include high-risk heterosexual contact with multiple partners, sexual contact with commercial sex workers, and migration (HIV rates are higher in bordering countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire and Togo).

#### **Military Statistics**

The Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) is estimated at approximately 12,000 members. The troops are highly mobile, currently engaged in several United Nations peacekeeping missions in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Liberia. No recent seroprevalence studies have been conducted in the GAF, so the current prevalence rate is unknown. Ghana expends 0.8% of the GDP on the military.

## PROGRAM RESPONSE

### **In-Country Ongoing Assistance**

The AIDS Control Program and the Public Health Division of the GAF implement the HIV/AIDS program. DHAPP staff provide technical assistance and support to the GAF's program with support from the Office of Defense Cooperation at the US Embassy. In addition, DHAPP staff are members of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Ghana Country Team and participated in developing the Country Operational Plan (COP) for FY08.



### **Foreign Military Financing Assistance**

Ghana was awarded Foreign Military Financing funding for the acquisition of laboratory equipment, and supporting reagents and supplies related to the diagnosis and treatment of HIV/AIDS. This award was appropriated for fiscal years 2003 and 2005. Funding for 2003 was released for expenditure during FY05, and funding for 2005 was released during FY07. These funds have been used to procure CD4 count and viral load testing equipment, a refrigerator and centrifuge, a needed laboratory computer, in addition to other supporting diagnostic supplies and reagents. Although still in negotiation, the current proposal for FY05 funds includes procuring a hematology analyzer, along with the supporting diagnostic supplies and reagents.

## OUTCOMES & IMPACT

### **Prevention**

The GAF reported continued success in its prevention and care programs during

FY07. Through prevention activities, 2,030 troops were reached with comprehensive prevention messages and 200 individuals were trained as peer educators. When troops deploy on peacekeeping operations, they are tested for HIV prior to deployment, and peer educators are embedded in the units. The GAF has 7 service outlets that provide prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) services. Throughout the year, 863 pregnant women used PMTCT services, and 6 women were provided with a complete course of antiretroviral prophylaxis.

### Care

The GAF has 1 service outlet that provided palliative care for 150 troops and family members. At the palliative care outlet, 20 HIV-infected individuals received clinical prophylaxis and/or treatment for tuberculosis. Four (4) Counseling and Testing (CT) Centers were operational for GAF personnel and families. Some CT centers were unable to provide their data so the number of people tested is not inclusive of all people tested. Of the CT Centers that reported data, 863 troops and family members were tested for HIV and received their results. Twenty-four (24) individuals were trained in the provision of CT services.

### Treatment

One (1) service outlet provides treatment services to the GAF and family members. During FY07, 68 individuals were newly initiated on antiretroviral therapy (ART), and at the end of the reporting period, a total of 95 clients were on ART. Twenty-seven (27) health workers were trained in ART services delivery, and in laboratory services, 25 individuals were trained according to national standards.

### Proposed Future Activities

Continued comprehensive HIV programming for GAF members and their families was proposed to the PEPFAR Ghana Country Team. All proposed activities were included in the FY08 COP. Some of these activities include continued prevention efforts, increased CT services, and the expansion of staff to better assist with the GAF's program.