



# GUYANA

# 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 Guyana is 771,000, with a life expectancy of 66 years, evenly distributed between men and women. English is the official language of Guyana, but other languages are spoken, such as Amerindian dialects, Creole, Caribbean Hindustani and Urdu. The literacy rate in Guyana is 99%, and the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is \$5,300. The Guyanese economy exhibited moderate economic growth in 2001–2007, based on expansion in the agricultural and mining sectors, a more favorable atmosphere for business initiatives, a more realistic exchange rate, fairly low inflation, and the continued support of international organizations. Economic recovery since the 2005 flood-related contraction has been buoyed by increases in remittances and foreign direct investment. Guyana's entrance into the CARICOM Single Market and Economy in January 2006 will broaden the country's export market, primarily in the raw materials sector.

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

The HIV prevalence rate in Guyana's general population is estimated at 2.4%, with approximately 12,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. It has the second highest HIV prevalence rate in Latin America and the Caribbean. Accounting for approximately 80% of AIDS cases, heterosexual contact is the main risk factor, and men who have sex with men accounts for nearly 21% of AIDS cases.

#### **Military Statistics**

The Guyana Defense Force (GDF) is estimated at 2,000 troops. Guyana allocates 1.8% of the GDP for military expenditures. HIV prevalence has been estimated at 0.64% among military recruits in Guyana.

## PROGRAM RESPONSE

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

The Center for Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance Medicine (CDHAM), implementing agency for the United States Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences, works with the GDF on its HIV/AIDS program. CDHAM has hired an in-country project manager to coordinate the program. They also collaborate with DHAPP staff members and a representative from the Southern Command. In July 2007, 2 DHAPP staff members traveled to Guyana for program review assistance, and collaboration on its President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief Country Operational Plan for fiscal year 2008, as well as military-specific planning and technical assistance. CDHAM sent its in-country project manager to the DHAPP HIV/AIDS Program Manager Training Course in Stuttgart, Germany, in September 2007.

## OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

### **Prevention**

Many prevention activities occurred in the GDF, such as training 44 peer educators who reached 808 members, including active duty and reserve personnel. AIDS prevention posters and 3 billboards were produced for the GDF and displayed on bases throughout Guyana. Red ribbons were designed and produced for the military to demonstrate their solidarity to HIV/AIDS prevention. Eleven (11) outlets participated in blood-safety activities, and 18 military members were trained in blood safety. An additional campaign was launched to educate about occupational exposure management and was displayed throughout the Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) Centers.



## Care

One of the biggest accomplishments for the GDF this year was the establishment of 2 VCT Centers. Twenty eight (28) military members were trained in CT for the new sites. Computer systems and laboratory equipment were procured for the VCT Centers. The National AIDS Programme Secretariat provided training for 34 doctors and medics in the GDF Medical Corps on postexposure prophylaxis care and treatment. In addition, 23 medical personnel received training in tuberculosis, sexually transmitted infections, and opportunistic infections.



## Proposed Future Activities

More prevention efforts are planned for FY08 including a health fair for soldiers and their families, which will promote HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention, nutrition, and CT. Educational material is being developed on correct condom use and comprehensive HIV/AIDS education and will be distributed to the GDF. The refurbishment of a laboratory located at the GDF headquarters and a VCT Center in Timehri are planned, as well as CT training for 30 new individuals. Mobile VCT services will be provided at various bases throughout the GDF. Palliative care training will be provided for 20 medical personnel. In addition, one physician from the GDF will attend DHAPP's *Military International HIV Training Program* in San Diego. All activities were included in the FY08 COP.