



MALAWI

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 Malawi is 13.9 million people, with an average life expectancy of 43 years. Chichewa is the official language of Malawi, which has an estimated literacy rate of 63%, unevenly distributed between men and women. Landlocked Malawi ranks among the world's most densely populated and least developed countries. The economy is predominately agricultural, with about 85% of the population living in rural areas. Agriculture accounts for more than one third of gross domestic product (GDP) and 90% of export revenues. The GDP per capita is \$800, with 53% of Malawian people living below the poverty level.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in general population of Malawi is estimated at 14.1%, with approximately 940,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Most cases of HIV in Malawi are spread through multi-partner heterosexual sex and mother-to-child transmission. HIV prevalence is almost twice as high in urban areas as in rural areas. More than half of the new HIV infections are occurring in young people aged 15–24 years.

Military Statistics

The Malawi Armed Forces (MAF) is estimated at approximately 7,000 members. Malawi expends 1.3% of its GDP on the military. A seroprevalence study in the MAF was conducted but results have not yet been released.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

The MAF established an HIV and AIDS Coordinating Team made up of MAF personnel. They work directly with Population Services International (PSI), which provides prevention education, and counseling and testing (CT) services, as well as technical assistance to the MAF. Personnel from the US Embassy, particularly the Political Officer and the Military Program Assistant, along with DHAPP staff coordinate with the MAF and PSI on the program. The Malawi College of Health Sciences also works with the MAF as a partner and provides training for health professionals such as nurses and clinicians.



Foreign Military Financing Assistance

Malawi 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 2005 and 2006, and 2005 funding was released for expenditure during FY07. Although still in negotiation, the current proposal for these funds includes procuring a CD4 machine and a fluorescent microscope in addition to other supporting diagnostic supplies and reagents.

OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

Prevention

The MAF reported continued success in its prevention, care, and treatment programs during FY07. During the year, 3,086 military personnel were reached with comprehensive prevention messages. The MAF supported 39 condom service outlets. Four (4) service outlets carried out blood-safety activities for the MAF.

Prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) is a priority area for the MAF so it has continued to strengthen these services. Increasing its service outlets from 2 to 4 this year, the MAF provided 486 pregnant women with PMTCT services at the outlets, and 6 women received a complete course of antiretroviral prophylaxis. Three (3) health care workers were provided training in the provision of these services.

Care

Six (6) MAF outlets provided HIV-related palliative care. During the year, 75 military members or family members were provided with HIV-related palliative care, with 50 of those treated for tuberculosis. Since nonmilitary individuals can receive care from MAF outlets, 670 individuals were provided with palliative care. Forty-five (45) caregivers were provided with palliative care training over several weeks that covered topics such as preventive care and management, as well as opportunistic infection reduction. MAF outlets provided services to 280 orphans and vulnerable children.

In July 2007, a new counseling and testing (CT) Center was handed over to the MAF so that it could expand its CT abilities to better serve the military personnel and their families. At



the end of FY07, 6 CT Centers were operational for MAF personnel and families. During the year, 3,206 troops were tested for HIV and received their results.

Treatment

During the fiscal year, 4 outlets provided antiretroviral therapy (ART) for MAF members and families. By the end of the fiscal year, 1,668 MAF personnel and family members were on ART. Three (3) MAF medical personnel were trained in the provision of ART services.

Proposed Future Activities

DHAPP received one proposal from PSI on behalf of the MAF for FY08. The main objectives of the proposal included continued efforts in prevention such as training for master trainers, troop-level prevention education, behavior change communication material, a knowledge, attitudes, and practices survey, and increased testing of MAF troops.