



PAPUA NEW GUINEA



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 Papua New Guinea is 5.9 million people, with an average life expectancy of 66 years. Melanesian Pidgin, English, and Motu are spoken in Papua New Guinea, which has an estimated literacy rate of 57%, unevenly distributed between men and women. Papua New Guinea is richly endowed with natural resources, but exploitation has been hampered by rugged terrain and the high cost of developing infrastructure. Agriculture provides a subsistence livelihood for 85% of the population. The gross domestic product per capita is \$2,900, with 37% of Papua New Guinean people living below the poverty level.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in Papua New Guinea's general population is estimated at less than 1.8%. Roughly 60,000 people were living with HIV in FY07. The main mode of transmission is heterosexual contact. Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are rising; sexual assault of women in Papua New Guinea is one of the highest in the world, increasing the risk of HIV infections and transmission of STIs.

Military Statistics

The Papua New Guinea Defense Force (PNGDF) is estimated at approximately 2,300 members. Military HIV prevalence rates are unknown.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

The US Pacific Command and its implementing agent, the Center of Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance, have continued to collaborate with the PNGDF for program activities.

OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

Prevention

During FY07, Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials were developed for new recruits.

Care

PNGDF supported 2 Counseling and Testing (CT) centers, and 1,300 military members were tested for HIV and received their results. Two (2) PNGDF personnel were trained in the provision of CT services at the Regional Training Center (RTC) in Bangkok, Thailand, in February 2007. Throughout the fiscal year, over 8,400 rapid HIV test kits were provided to the PNGDF. Planning for the renovations of 5 additional CT Centers is currently under way, with an estimated completion date of late FY08.

Treatment

Two (2) military nurses attended the Infectious Diseases Institute *HIV/AIDS Training Program for Nurses and Clinical Officers* in Kampala, Uganda, in June 2007. The recipients of this training, along with the nurses trained at the RTC in Thailand, served as trainers in the clinical workshop offered to military nurses. In addition, 2 PNGDF personnel attended the Regional Training Center in Bangkok, Thailand, for HIV diagnostic laboratory training. Procurement of HIV laboratory and supporting equipment was completed in August 2007. The delivery of equipment was scheduled for early FY08.

Other

A PNGDF representative was invited to present at the 17th *Asia Pacific Military Medicine Conference* in Manila, Philippines, during the HIV/AIDS session. Exchange at this annual regional military medical conference allows for sharing best practices and knowledge of military HIV activities within the region.

Proposed Future Activities

A portfolio review is planned for summer 2008, and will determine future activities with the PNGDF.

