



## SENEGAL

# 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 Senegal is 12.9 million people, with an average life expectancy of 57 years. French is the official language of Senegal, which has an estimated literacy rate of 39%, unevenly distributed between men and women. In January 1994, Senegal undertook a bold and ambitious economic reform program with the support of the international donor community. As a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, Senegal is working toward greater regional integration with a unified external tariff and a more stable monetary policy. The gross domestic product per capita is \$1,700, with 54% of Senegalese people living below the poverty level. Senegal remains one of the most stable democracies in Africa, and has a long history of participating in international peacekeeping.

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

The HIV prevalence rate in Senegal's general population is estimated at 0.9%, with approximately 61,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Senegal is considered to have a concentrated epidemic. Although the HIV rate in the general public has been consistently low, specific vulnerable populations have much higher prevalence rates, such as 17% among commercial sex workers. Identified risk factors include heterosexual contact with multiple partners and contact with commercial sex workers.

#### **Military Statistics**

The Senegalese Armed Forces (SAF) consists of approximately 16,000 active-duty members. Senegal expends 1.4% of the GDP on their military. In 2006, the SAF conducted a behavioral and biological surveillance survey. The study found that from a sample of 745 SAF personnel, the HIV infection rate was 0.7% and that the

knowledge of HIV had improved from 2002 (61.7 % in 2002 to 89.8 % in 2006) according to the behavioral survey. The military does not perform forcewide testing but it does test troops prior to deployment on peacekeeping operations (PKOs).

## PROGRAM RESPONSE

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

The HIV/AIDS Program for the SAF is a collaborative effort between the AIDS Program Division of the SAF, the Office of Defense Coordination (ODC) at the US Embassy and DHAPP. An in-country program manager who works for the ODC, works with SAF personnel and DHAPP staff to manage the program. The program manager also works with other US Government agencies that are members of the President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in Senegal. Senegal is a bilateral program for PEPFAR and has a Country Team. DHAPP staff members have been involved in every level of country planning, ensuring that SAF programs are adequately addressed.

### **Foreign Military Financing Assistance**

Senegal 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, 2005, and 2006. Funding for 2003 and 2005 was released for expenditure during FY05 and FY07, respectively. To date, 2003 funding has been used to procure CD4 count equipment, an ELISA machine, hematology analyzer, and HIV rapid test kits, in addition to other supporting diagnostic supplies and reagents. Plans for 2005 funding procurements are under way.

### **Prevention**

Since its inception, the HIV/AIDS Program of the SAF has promoted not only abstinence and fidelity but also the use of condoms. The sexually transmitted infection and HIV/AIDS prevention program used Information, Education, and Communication (IEC)



approaches to reach 12,996 troops.

The SAF strategically targeted vulnerable groups: new recruits, peacekeepers, and military officers in post conflict zones. Three (3) mass social mobilization campaigns targeted new recruits. Ten (10) conferences benefited troops participating in PKOs in Darfur, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Liberia. Two hundred eighty three (283) discussion groups benefited troops and their families. They proved to be highly effective for behavior change, according to the military's behavioral and biological surveillance survey. The survey was conducted with the assistance of the National Council Against AIDS in Senegal, the Senegalese Ministry of Health, and the SAF AIDS Program Division. It demonstrated that 68% of troops were reached in the discussion groups. In order to finance and implement the survey, many agencies were involved, including the Agency for the Promotion of Population Activities, biological and virological laboratories of Le Dantec Hospital, Cooperation Francaise, the Global Fund, the US Agency for International Development, and DHAPP.



Behavioral change communication (BCC) materials were distributed in the amount of 6,417 units, and 4 radio programs were broadcasted. A total of 253 peer educators, including those accompanying the PKO troops, were trained and were instrumental in prevention activities. A peer educator guide was developed by the SAF and DHAPP and is near completion. Finally, HIV/AIDS knowledge has improved, from a rate of 62% in 2002 to 90% in 2006, according to the SAF behavioral and biological surveillance survey.

Three (3) SAF facilities carry out blood-safety activities: the Hospital Militaire de Oukam (principle military hospital in Dakar) and 2 medical service outlets in

Ziguinchor and Tambacounda (both are in the southern region where most Senegalese troops are stationed). Blood-safety trainings were held for highly vulnerable, post conflict regions such as Tambacounda and Ziguinchor, as well as for major service providers in Dakar. The 2-day trainings were on accidental exposure to blood, and they benefited 50 nurses, physicians, and dentists.

During the reporting period, 3 of 12 prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) sites were closed due to human resource shortages. The SAF continues to promote HIV testing of pregnant women at each of its 9 PMTCT sites through provider-initiated testing. A total of 1,071 women were counseled and tested.

### Care

Palliative care services are provided by the regional chief medical officers in the different military zones serving both troops and family members. There are 18 service outlets for the SAF throughout Senegal. The majority of the patients were monitored at the Hospital Militaire de Oukam in Dakar. Accuracy of reporting palliative care patients at the service outlets outside of Dakar is expected to improve with a new reporting system. It is currently being developed and will harmonize indicators for PEPFAR and DHAPP as well as feed into the national database managed by the National Council Against AIDS in Senegal.

Seven (7) service outlets provide Counseling and Testing (CT) for the SAF. A total of 7,828 troops were counseled and received their test results. The high testing rate is partially due to the prevention strategy the SAF has adopted. First of all, testing services always precede the mass sensitization events. Secondly, the protocol for testing soldiers at the military camps requires individual counseling followed by testing and receipt of their results. Counseling is conducted by either medical physicians or social assistants.

Chief of the troops and commanders of the regions are always the first to be tested for HIV, followed by their troops. In addition, there is CT training for the new medical officers who have recently graduated from Senegal's military

medical school, Ecole Militaire de Sante, located in Camp Dial Diop. Throughout the year, 38 individuals were trained in the provision of CT services.

DHAPP continues to support building laboratory infrastructure across the country for such sites as the Hospital Militaire de Oukam in Dakar and the lab facilities of the Senegalese Gendarme located in St. Louis, Kolda, Tambacounda, Ziguinchor, Thies, and Kaolak. Laboratory infrastructure is supported with Foreign Military Financing funding.



### **Treatment**

The SAF has 3 service outlets that provide antiretroviral therapy (ART). They are the Hospital Militaire de Oukam in Dakar and 2 new regional medical clinics in Ziguinchor and Tambacounda. Only the laboratory in Dakar has the capacity for CD4 testing. Military personnel who cannot come to the the Hospital Militaire de Oukam in Dakar are referred to regional civilian hospitals for CD4 testing. ART at the regional level is carried out in close collaboration with the Senegalese Regional Coordination Committees to Fight against AIDS. In FY07, 21 clients were started on ART.

### **Other**

The SAF AIDS Program Division is aligning itself with the Senegalese national reporting system. Senegal will be implementing WHO's HealthMapper as its national reporting tool for all health agencies. In preparation, 20 chief medical officers participated in HealthMapper training, sponsored by PEPFAR.

In Ziguinchor, 20 chief commanders were trained on leadership and HIV/AIDS prevention. Two (2) medical officers attended a 2-week course on monitoring

and evaluation of HIV/AIDS programs offered by the Centre Africain D'Etudes Supérieures Gestion (CESAG).

Ten (10) evaluation visits were conducted in the 7 military zones of Senegal. The visits assisted in the identification of field needs and the progress in the decentralization process, as well as integration and coordination of program response at the decentralized levels. Some key issues identified were gaps in human capacity for program management and indicator reporting for DHAPP and PEPFAR and the Senegalese Ministry of Health's national reporting system. The program management issue is mostly due to chief medical officers' mobility and PKO deployments, as well as the importance of engaging the military wives for the sensitization of family members and PMTCT efforts.

The director for the SAF AIDS Program Division attended a conference in Burkina Faso, where he presented research on condom use with casual partners in the military. A chief medical officer in Ziguinchor conducted a military behavioral survey in his region, where higher HIV prevalence rates are recorded. The survey results and recommendations will be taken into account during the planning phases for the FY08 SAF-DHAPP HIV/AIDS prevention programming.

One SAF member attended the *7th Annual Defense Institute for Medical Operations HIV/AIDS Planning and Policy Development Course* in San Antonio, Texas, in December 2007. The director of the AIDS Program Division of the SAF presented findings on the impacts of the SAF-DHAPP HIV/AIDS prevention program since 2003, with reference to the military's behavioral and biological surveillance surveys in 2002 and 2006.

### **Proposed Future Activities**

Continued comprehensive HIV programming for the SAF was proposed to the PEPFAR Senegal Country Team and DHAPP. Some of these activities include continued prevention efforts, drafting HIV policy, capacity development of SAF members, and development of an OVC program.