



THAILAND

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 Thailand is 65 million people, with an average life expectancy of 73 years. Thai is the official language of Thailand, which has an estimated literacy rate of 93%, evenly distributed between men and women. Economic growth in 2007 was due almost entirely to robust export performance, despite the pressure of an appreciating currency. Exports have performed at record levels, rising nearly 17% in 2006 and 12% in 2007. Export-oriented manufacturing, in particular automobile production, and farm output are driving these gains. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is \$8,000, with 10% of Thai people living below the poverty level.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in Thailand's general population is estimated at 1.4%, with approximately 580,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. It is believed that heterosexual intercourse still accounts for the majority of new infections.

Military Statistics

The Royal Thai Armed Forces (RTAF) comprise approximately 300,000 active-duty members. Thailand expends 1.8% of the GDP on military purposes. Military HIV prevalence rates are unknown.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

Since 2003, the US Pacific Command (USPACOM) and its implementing agent, the Center of Excellence (COE), have used a strategy of leveraging its established working relations with military partners and civilian experts to catalyze regional cooperation on HIV/AIDS issues. To accomplish this, a partnership with the RTAF continues to be essential to enabling a “neighbors teaching neighbors” approach. USPACOM/COE together with US Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences (AFRIMS) support a military Regional Training Center responsible for education of a core group of military medical officers. These officers form a group of their respective country’s military HIV/AIDS prevention efforts and serve as liaisons and advocates for future work.

OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

Prevention and Care

Thirty (30) medical military delegates from 14 Asia-Pacific nations (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Timor Leste, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Mauritius, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand), attended the first *Asia-Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS Counseling and Education Workshop for Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, and Physician Assistants*. The 4-day workshop was held at the Phramongkutklo Military Medical Center in Bangkok, Thailand and was supported by the RTC. The workshop was intended to raise awareness of the importance of counseling, by encouraging participants to consider psychosocial issues as well as technical and accommodative skills, which may influence approaches and increase effectiveness in HIV/AIDS instruction, communication, counseling, and education. The workshop began in a didactic environment with a series of lectures, followed by time allotted at the end of each session for open dialogue and questions, and progressed to active participation into accommodative learning via role-playing sessions. It encompassed topics that ranged from general HIV/AIDS counseling concepts and clinical issues to specific skills on counseling and communicating with patients.

Proposed Future Activities

DHAPP received a proposal for FY08 activities from USPACOM, working through its executive agent, COE, and the RTAF to support a series of HIV/AIDS workshops. Three (3) workshops are proposed and will cover (1) counseling and education, (2) care and treatment, and (3) laboratory technical training. The counseling and education workshop will present the medical issues regarding counseling strategies, techniques, and impact related to prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. This workshop will create awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS in the military sector, including the policy component of addressing the virus in the military setting, and will share lessons learned and best practices. The treatment and care workshop will provide “best practices” instruction to military medical professionals in HIV/AIDS treatment and care. The laboratory technical training workshop will improve military medical laboratory capability related to HIV/AIDS prevention activities and will provide technical instruction in HIV diagnostic testing. Twenty countries (20) are expected to participate in the workshop series.

