

# BOTSWANA

# 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**

Botswana has maintained one of the world's highest economic growth rates since achieving independence in 1966, though growth slowed to 4.7% annually in 2006–2007. Through fiscal discipline and sound management, Botswana has transformed itself from one of the poorest countries in the world to a middle-income country. Diamond mining has fueled much of the expansion and currently accounts for more than one third of the GDP and for 70% to 80% of export earnings. Tourism, financial services, subsistence farming, and cattle raising are other key sectors. The estimated population of Botswana is 1.8 million people, with an average life expectancy of 50 years. English is the official language of Botswana, but the vast majority of people speak Setswana. The country has an estimated literacy rate of 81%, evenly distributed between men and women. The GDP per capita is \$15,800.

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

The HIV prevalence rate in Botswana's general population is considered one of the highest in the world, estimated at 23.9%. Botswana has approximately 280,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Identified risk factors include high-risk heterosexual contact with multiple partners, in-country migration, and lack of care and treatment for STIs. Heterosexual contact is the principal mode of transmission.

#### **Military Statistics**

The Botswana Defense Forces (BDF) is estimated at 10,000 active-duty personnel. No prevalence data are available, but the BDF is currently conducting a seroprevalence study.



Botswana expends 3.4% of the GDP on the military.

## PROGRAM RESPONSE

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

Through the US OSC, a DHAPP program manager works in collaboration with DHAPP staff, PSI and the BDF. DHAPP staff are an active member of the PEPFAR Botswana Country Support Team, and provided technical assistance in developing the BDF COP for FY09. PSI also works as an implementing partner with the BDF for prevention activities.



### **Foreign Military Financing Assistance**

Botswana 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 FY03 and was released in FY05. To date, funding for the 2003 appropriation has been used to procure a CD4 machine, a chemistry analyzer, and a PCR analyzer.

## OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

### **Prevention**

The OSC, in conjunction with the BDF and PSI, reported reaching 6,324 troops and family members with comprehensive prevention messages, as well as training 721 peer educators. Significant progress was made in this year in training peer educators. The continued goal of the program is to reach more troops and family members with prevention messages.

The BDF has consulted the National Health Laboratory of Botswana and the Botswana-Harvard Partnership for oversight and direction on procuring additional laboratory equipment. The Botswana-Harvard School of Public Health AIDS Initiative for HIV Research and Education is a collaborative research and training initiative between the Government of the Republic of Botswana and the Harvard AIDS Initiative. Currently, 5 service outlets carry out blood-safety activities. Eight (8) individuals were trained in blood safety. In collaboration with John Snow International, 354 BDF members were trained in injection safety.

Six (6) service outlets provide PMTCT services. Twenty-six (26) health care workers were trained in the provision of PMTCT services. Through intensive mobilization campaigns, the military health services have seen an increase in the number of pregnant women using PMTCT services. Much of this accomplishment is due to the collaboration between the BDF and the Botswana MOH.

### **Care and Treatment**

CT services are critical to the BDF's program, and 8 outlets offer these services. Construction of the new CT center for the BDF is under way and should be completed in FY09. Strategically chosen, 125 HIV counselors were trained so that all BDF installations have coverage. In FY08, 1,580 individuals were counseled and tested.

The BDF supports 8 service outlets that provide palliative care and ART to its troops, family members, and their civilian neighbors. Sixty-two (62) individuals were trained in the provision of these services. Sixty-two (62) health care workers were trained in the delivery of ARV services, and 21 individuals were trained in laboratory-related activities. The BDF's number of troops receiving palliative care and/or treatment services is classified.

### Other

HIV policy training was provided to 19 individuals, and 335 individuals were trained in HIV-related community mobilization for prevention, care, and/or treatment. Through the collaborative efforts of DHAPP, the National AIDS Coordinating Agency, the Institute of Development Management in Botswana, a monitoring and evaluation training course was held for 27 BDF members. The success of the training will ensure more accurate and timely reports from the BDF as well as assist them in strategic planning for ending the spread of HIV/AIDS in the military. Plans are currently under way for a seroprevalence and behavioral survey within the BDF. In FY09, the survey should be launched.

### Proposed Future Activities

Continued comprehensive HIV programming for BDF members and their families was proposed to the PEPFAR Botswana Country Support Team. All proposed activities were included in the FY09 COP. Some of these activities include continued prevention efforts, review and possible revision of HIV policy, training of BDF medical personnel on TB treatment, building infrastructure of electronic data management for ART patients, and conducting a seroprevalence and behavioral survey.

