

# GUYANA

# 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 Guyana is 771,000, with a life expectancy of 66 years, evenly distributed between men and women. English is the official language of Guyana, but other languages are spoken, such as Amerindian dialects, Creole, Caribbean Hindustani, and Urdu. The literacy rate in Guyana is 99%, and the GDP per capita is \$4,000. The Guyanese economy exhibited moderate economic growth in 2001–2007, based on expansion in the agricultural and mining sectors, a more favorable atmosphere for business initiatives, a more realistic exchange rate, fairly low inflation, and the continued support of international organizations. Economic recovery since the 2005 flood-related contraction has been buoyed by increases in remittances and foreign direct investment. Guyana's entrance into the CARICOM Single Market and Economy in January 2006 will continue to broaden the country's export market, primarily in the raw materials sector.

#### HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in Guyana's general population is estimated at 2.5%, with approximately 12,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. A more accurate picture is emerging of the epidemic in Guyana, where HIV transmission is occurring primarily through unprotected sexual intercourse. In a 2005 population-based survey, about 40% of young (aged 15–24 years) women and 80% of young men said they had had sex with a non-regular partner in the previous year, and about two thirds (68% and 62%, respectively) of those men and women said they had used a condom when doing so. Among female sex workers, the HIV prevalence is 31% in Guyana.



## **Military Statistics**

The Guyana Defense Force (GDF) is estimated at 2,000 troops. Guyana allocates 1.8% of the GDP for military expenditures. HIV prevalence has been estimated at 0.64% among military recruits in Guyana.

## **PROGRAM RESPONSE**

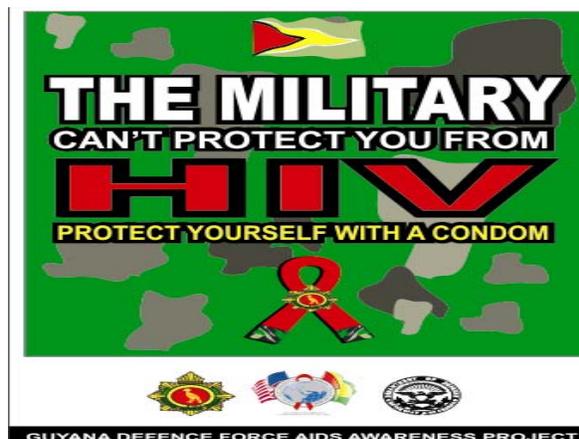
### **In-Country Ongoing Assistance**

DHAPP staff members and a USSOUTHCOM have been working with the US MLO in Georgetown and the GDF. The GDF's HIV/AIDS program continues to grow each year.

## **Outcomes and Impact**

### **Prevention**

Many prevention activities occurred in the GDF, such as training 121 peer educators who reached 586 members, including active duty and reserve personnel. In an effort to scale up prevention awareness, 3 additional billboards were displayed in several regions of the country. Twelve (12) condom service outlets were supported throughout the GDF. Condom dispensaries were mounted on the walls of the clubs, medical centers, and central locations of the various bases. Condom pouches have been designed to be worn on the military uniforms and is pending approval by the GDF Project Implementer. Special camouflaged packaging to heighten condom distribution was procured and female condoms are available to the GDF.



Three (3) outlets participated in blood-safety activities, and 21 military members were trained in blood safety. In September 2008, 37 medics were trained in injection safety, done in conjunction with the Guyana Safer Injection Project. Many of the personnel trained were master trainers and will train other medics from the various GDF medical centers.

### Care

One of the biggest accomplishments for the GDF in FY07 was the establishment of 2 CT centers which brings the total number of CT centers to 10. Included in the total number of CT centers is a recently purchased mobile CT center. It will also be used for transporting peer educators and for other related project activities. Refurbishment of the CT center at Base Camp Ayanganna was completed on June 20, 2008, and it included laboratory equipment procured by DHAPP. Thirty-two (32) military members were trained in CT services. In FY08, the GDF was able to provide CT services to 1,056 troops and family members.

The National AIDS Programme Secretariat provided training for 31 doctors and medics in the GDF Medical Corps on postexposure prophylaxis care and treatment. In addition, 14 medical personnel received training in TB, STIs, and OIs. DHAPP supported the operations of 1 laboratory with the capacity to perform HIV tests and CD4 tests, and 2 laboratory technicians were trained in lab ART services.



### Proposed Future Activities

Sporting and cultural events featuring prevention messages through edutainment are planned for FY09, including song, dance, and drama performances by local artists infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. The GDF will continue to collaborate with the National AIDS Programme Secretariat to participate in activities such as the National Week of Counseling and Testing, and a health fair for World AIDS Day. The MOH designated the week of November 21–27 as the National Week of Testing for HIV in Guyana and has targeted 10,000 persons to be tested during that week in all regions of the country. All of the trained and certified counselors and testers from the GDF will be used during the National Week of Testing.

Trainings are planned for the GDF in laboratory services, TB services, and injection and blood safety. Mobile CT services will continue to be provided at various bases throughout the GDF. Educational materials will be distributed to military personnel with information on HIV prevention, CT, STIs, and stigma and discrimination.

