

UGANDA

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 Uganda is 31.4 million people, with an average life expectancy of 52 years. English is the official language of Uganda, which has an estimated literacy rate of 67%, unevenly distributed between men and women. Uganda has substantial natural resources, including fertile soils, regular rainfall, and sizable mineral deposits of copper and cobalt. Agriculture is the most important sector of the economy, employing over 80% of the work force. The GDP per capita is \$1,100.

#### HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in Uganda's general population is estimated at 5.4%, with approximately 810,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Identified significant risk factors include high-risk heterosexual contact with multiple partners and STIs. Prevalence is higher in urban areas (10.7%) than in rural areas (6.4%). Prevalence is higher among women than men.



### **Military Statistics**

The Ugandan Peoples Defense Force (UPDF) consists of approximately 50,000 active-duty members, with an estimated 200,000 dependents. Uganda expends 2.2% of the GDP on the military. Military HIV prevalence rates are unknown, but a seroprevalence survey was conducted and analysis is underway.

### **PROGRAM RESPONSE**

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

The UPDF HIV/AIDS Control Program is a collaborative effort between the UPDF, the DAO at the US Embassy in Kampala, DHAPP, the University of Connecticut Center for Health, Intervention, and Prevention (CHIP), and the Uganda-based National Medical Research Unit (NAMERU). An in-country program manager who works out of the DAO oversees the day-to-day operations of the program, including oversight of the implementing partners.

DHAPP staff members provided technical assistance to the UPDF during in-country visits throughout FY08. The purpose of the trips included review, assistance, and preparation of the PEPFAR COP for FY09, as well as military-specific planning and technical assistance to the UPDF and US Embassy personnel. DHAPP staff members represent the UPDF as members of the PEPFAR Country Support Team, and have been involved in every level of country planning, ensuring that UPDF programs are adequately addressed.

#### **Foreign Military Financing Assistance**

Uganda 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 2003, 2004, 2006, and 2007. Funding for the 2003 and 2004 appropriation was released for expenditure during FY05 and FY07, respectively. To date, the 2003-04 funding appropriation has been used to procure hematology and chemistry analyzers, in addition to supporting diagnostic supplies and reagents for 4 of the 8 HIV ARV delivery sites. Procurements using remaining 2004 appropriation

funding are currently under way, to include 3 hematology analyzers and supporting reagents.

## OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

### **Prevention**

There has been increased momentum in HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, thanks largely to the involvement of the UPDF commanders and female leaders in the military communities in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The provision of a film van for the UPDF health workers by DHAPP has tremendously boosted the accessibility of prevention messages to rural units and troops. Prevention messages in film are being delivered to rural units that had been impossible to reach. During FY08, 76,778 troops, family members, and civilians in the surrounding military communities were reached with comprehensive prevention messages, and 210 peer educators were trained in the provision of these messages. The mobility of troops provides a challenge to carrying out follow-up prevention activities.



The UPDF has ensured that condoms continue to be part of the military kits for soldiers going into operational zones. The UPDF supports at least 10 condom service outlets at the division-level hospitals. As data reporting improves, more-accurate information will be provided on the exact number of condom service outlets.

There are 8 service outlets carrying out blood safety activities for the UPDF, and 30 individuals were trained in the provision of blood safety prevention. The UPDF has entered into a partnership with NAMERU to strengthen provision of injection safety services in its health facilities. The level of awareness for injection safety among UPDF health care workers is steadily increasing. Activities with NAMERU will include undertaking a situational analysis and needs assessment, training medical workers, and procuring auto-disabling syringes and proper waste disposal containers.

Four (4) service outlets provide PMTCT services for the UPDF. There were 396 women who were provided with these services including counseling and receiving their testing results. Of those women, 54 were given a complete course of ARV prophylaxis.

The UPDF decided to augment PMTCT services at 4 of the military bases with ART clinics. The augmented activities included sensitization and increased awareness for pregnant women to access services. Midwives and nurses have been trained according to the Ugandan Ministry of Health guidelines. PMTCT service outlets are also used to identify discordant couples and emphasize linkage to clinical services for testing and treatment. An assessment is under way to estimate the gaps of human resources within the UPDF's PMTCT sites, including personnel needs, training, and retention; CT for pregnant women; PMTCT services and ART linkages; and follow-up procedures for the mother and infant. One notable observation is the very low level of access to PMTCT services accessed by pregnant women (less than 40%) - and an even lower level for their families. Commodity stock-outs are part of the assessment process.

In the coming year, the PMTCT program will focus on increasing the coverage of women accessing services in UPDF facilities. The goal will be to reach 75% of all pregnant women and 25% of their spouses and partners with PMTCT services.

## Care

Twenty-four (24) service outlets provide palliative care services for the UPDF, their families, and civilians in the surrounding communities. During FY08, 29,948 individuals were provided with palliative care services, and 34 health workers were trained in the provision of these services. In the reporting period, none of the health facilities reported stock out of cotrimoxazole for prophylaxis treatment of common OIs .

The training for palliative care services was provided for physicians, nurses, and clinical officers, through IDI in Kampala. IDI, in collaboration with the UPDF, has developed a course aimed to ramp up skills in ART use, recognition and management of OIs, and PMTCT services.

A pediatric technical consultant provided technical assistance to the UPDF on pediatric care and treatment. A strategic plan in pediatric care and treatment services will be developed and it will include assessment of appropriate ART formulation and training for health care providers. Monitoring clinical services, with electronic medical information systems to optimize clinical management will be initiated. There will be more of an emphasis on the integration of prevention, care, and treatment programs, thereby increasing the availability of materials for client-provider interaction.



The UPDF provided services to 863 orphans and vulnerable children and began a strategy of integrating support activities for the OVC into school-based programs, such as health education about abstinence, increasing counseling and care services coverage in the schools, and fighting stigma against those infected

with HIV. In this strategy, the teachers are specifically trained and empowered to incorporate OVC activities into their routine teaching curriculums. In addition, linkages have been made for OVC and services available to them, to include care and treatment. In addition, 22 UPDF health workers were trained in palliative care, adherence counseling, and quality data assessment by a team of CHIP researchers.

Eight (8) CT centers have been established, covering all of the major military bases, with 16,747 persons tested in 2008. Training for CT services was provided to 44 individuals. The CT program is directly linked to palliative care, including drugs for OIs, provided for HIV-infected military personnel and family members. On-the-job training for doctors, nurses, counselors, and clinical officers has been an area of emphasis for the UPDF.

### **Treatment**

ART is now provided through PEPFAR and Global Fund support at 8 UPDF sites, serving 5,029 military personnel, spouses, and children. During FY08, 1,394 individuals were newly initiated on ART.

### **Other**

In FY08, an HIV seroprevalence survey was conducted for the UPDF with the assistance of NAMERU. The survey targeted 3,000 randomly selected troops on 5 military bases across the country. Data analysis is in its final stages.

PEPFAR staff conducted site visits to the UPDF's Bombo General Military Hospital and 2 additional clinics for implementing an electronic Health Management Information System (HMIS). Specific recommendations were made, including training for UPDF data-entry staff. Implementation is under way, with development of a proper electronic HMIS that meets UPDF's monitoring of implementation needs, Ministry of Health and PEPFAR reporting requirements. To improve data-capture reporting in the UPDF, 3 health facilities (Bombo, Nakasongola, and Gulu) were selected to pilot an improved HMIS.

From these centers a total of 24 nursing assistants were trained in data collection, analysis, and reporting. An additional 30 health workers from the UPDF attended the MOH modular training in HMIS and integrated disease surveillance. Activities initiated in FY08 will continue in FY09. New activities will include the completion of the electronic HMIS, and expansion of it to the other 8 ART centers, as well as extension of Internet services.

### Proposed Future Activities

Ongoing successful UPDF and partner programming was expanded to include additional aspects of comprehensive prevention, care, and treatment for military members and their families. All proposed activities were submitted to the Uganda Country Support Team and were included in the FY09 COP.

