



STORIES of HOPE

GHANA

HIV Peer Educators Serve as Role Models in the Armed Forces



A peer educator, trained with support from PEPFAR, teaches members of the Ghana Armed Forces about HIV prevention.

The Ghana Armed Forces have seen a reduction in the number of sexual partners and an increase in the use of condoms.



With support from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR), an important collaboration with the Ghana Armed Forces began in 2004. This military-to-military partnership is focusing efforts on preventing new HIV infections and improving the quality of life for people living with HIV/AIDS in Ghana.

Members of the Ghana Armed Forces participate in UN Peacekeeping Missions across Africa, which now require mandatory HIV testing. In 2006, the Armed Forces plan to expand HIV counseling and testing by setting up centers at all medical facilities. To build human capacity to support HIV counseling and testing, the Emergency Plan supports efforts to train peer educators in HIV prevention. These peer educators hold group counseling sessions before soldiers are tested for HIV. In addition, peer educators provide fellow military members with educational materials for reference prior to deployment and organize follow-up HIV education sessions at deployment sites. In their units, these peer educators also serve as role models for behavior change.

With PEPFAR support, the Ghana Armed Forces plan to expand antiretroviral treatment services, designating 37 military hospitals as antiretroviral treatment centers. This partnership will build human capacity by training laboratory technologists in HIV immunology and virology; medical officers, pharmacists and nurses in clinical management of HIV/AIDS; and health workers in antiretroviral treatment adherence counseling.

With support from the Emergency Plan, the members of the Ghana Armed Forces can confidently say that they are winning the war against HIV/AIDS. Already, the Armed Forces have seen a reduction in the number of sexual partners and an increase in condom use. The HIV prevalence rate in the Armed Forces decreased from 4.2 percent in 2000 to about 1.0 percent at the end of 2005.

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

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