



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



SUCCESS STORY: THAILAND

Clinic Addresses Health-Services Gap along Thai-Burmese Border

The Mae Tao Clinic provides desperately needed health care services to Burmese migrants living and working in Tak Province in Northwest Thailand



USAID, Nicole Schiegg

A mother proudly shows off her newborn daughter at the Mae Tao Clinic.

Mae Tao Clinic works closely with Mae Sot hospital to prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission, delivering antenatal care to 3,000 clients between October 2004 and March 2005.

April 2005

U.S. Agency for International Development
www.usaid.gov

WITH SUPPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT'S Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, USAID helps the Mae Tao Clinic in Mae Sot, Thailand, provide desperately needed health care services to Burmese migrants, who are estimated to number about one million in that area along the Burmese border.

Established in 1989, the Mae Tao Clinic works with nongovernmental and community-based health organizations, the private sector, individual donors, and the Thai government to increase the availability and effectiveness of health care along the Thai-Burma border, where undocumented workers—about two-thirds of all Burmese working in Thailand—are denied services from other sources. Without access to services or education, many migrants and their families, particularly women, have little knowledge of HIV risk factors. This lack of awareness, combined with the ongoing exposure of male migrant workers to female sex workers in Thailand, creates an urgent need for HIV services, counseling, and treatment in Mae Tao.

Staffed primarily by volunteers and, occasionally, Western-trained physicians who spend a few weeks or months in residence, the Mae Tao Clinic works to fill this gap. The clinic provides reproductive health care and family planning, pre- and postnatal care, and education programs aimed at disease prevention, particularly for HIV/AIDS. With USAID funding, Family Health International is helping Mae Tao Clinic improve the quality of and access to counseling and testing, prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) services, blood safety screening, and home-based care for more than 58,000 Burmese migrants yearly.

Between April 2003 and March 2005, the clinic delivered counseling and testing services to 3,000 clients (60% from the sexually transmitted infections (STIs) clinic), 20% of whom were HIV-positive; of these, 1.5% were pregnant women, 1.0% blood donors, and 15% STI clients. To strengthen the counseling and testing component, 20 counselors were trained, and rapid testing was introduced. Since July 2004, the clinic has also worked closely with Mae Sot hospital in PMTCT. From July 2004 to March 2005, 2,123 pregnant women received counseling, and 1,590 of them were tested for HIV, of which 1.5% were HIV-positive. A total of 39 HIV-positive pregnant women were referred to the PMTCT program at Mae Sot Hospital and followed up closely by the Mae Tao Home-based Care team. This year the clinic is strengthening community outreach and improving support for HIV-positive mothers and their infants and spouses; 30 Mae Tao Clinic volunteers have already been trained to conduct home-based care. Home-based Care volunteers now provide care and support to 177 people living with AIDS and their families.

USAID supports the development of model programs that could be adapted and utilized in other countries, and increased access to care, support, and treatment for most-at-risk populations, people living with HIV/AIDS, and their families. The Mae Tao Clinic is clearly an important part of this effort and is making significant contributions to HIV prevention and care in the region.