



## STORIES of HOPE

### ANGOLA

#### Building Capacity to Fight HIV/AIDS in the Armed Forces



The Emergency Plan supports HIV counseling and testing – a crucial gateway to prevention, treatment and care. In Angola, soldiers above get tested for HIV through a military-to-military program supported by PEPFAR.

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Building and sustaining capacity for lifesaving antiretroviral treatment (ART) and HIV counseling and testing is a critical goal of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR). In Angola, although an estimated 3.7 percent<sup>1</sup> of the adult population is living with HIV/AIDS, ART services are available in few locations. To address this problem, the Emergency Plan supports a collaborative HIV capacity-building program between the Angolan Armed Forces and Emergency Plan partner, the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science.

Through this PEPFAR-supported partnership, military medical providers receive training in the provision of ART. In 2004, Angolan military physicians received state-of-the-art training in ART at the Naval Health Research Center in San Diego, California.

Recently, over 100 military medical providers attended an ART training in the capital city of Luanda. During the training, HIV-positive soldiers and their partners shared stories of the challenges, difficulties and stigma they face. Many patients discussed the difficulties in obtaining appropriate viral load and CD4 tests, and one military leader noted the limited availability of antiretroviral medicines. Health care workers discussed concrete solutions to the barriers to ART.

The project supports efforts of the Angolan Armed Forces to enhance its HIV testing and laboratory capacity, enabling health care providers to better serve people living with HIV/AIDS. The partnership has created hope for longer, healthier lives for patients receiving ART through the Angolan Armed Forces and for all Angolans living with HIV/AIDS.

<sup>1</sup> UNAIDS, Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, 2006.

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

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