

AHF *in* GUATEMALA



FACTS (UNAIDS/WHO/UNICEF, 2008)

Country Population	13 million
Persons living with HIV/AIDS	59,000
Persons in need of ART	21,000
Persons receiving ART	7,800

2 AHF Sites:

Petén <i>opening 2009</i>	Xela <i>Ignacio Cohen Alcahe Clinic</i>
Patients on ART:	Total patients in care:
324	484

BACKGROUND

The Republic of Guatemala is roughly the size of Tennessee and though most of the population is rural, urbanization is accelerating. 50% of the population engages in some form of agriculture, often at the subsistence level. The official language is Spanish but many indigenous populations do not understand it (US State Department).

A key affected group in Guatemala is men who have sex with men (MSM). Prevention campaigns often neglect this group, though, as sex between men is highly stigmatized in most Latin American countries. For example, the Guatemalan government attributes only 15% of HIV infections to MSM, but activists estimate

the figure to be closer to 40% (Avert). According to UNAIDS, in 2002 HIV prevalence amongst MSM was as high as 11.5%. Commercial sex work is another major cause of HIV transmission.

Further, small-scale studies show that Mayans might be nearly three times more vulnerable to HIV than other members of the Guatemalan population. The Mayan population is often stigmatized, is generally of lower socioeconomic status, and accesses fewer health care services than other Guatemalans.

The adult HIV prevalence rate in Guatemala is approximately 0.8% and antiretroviral therapy (ART) coverage is at



about 37%. In 2007, 5,300 pregnant women living with HIV needed antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) for prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) but only 373 received them (about 7%).

AHF's GLOBAL PROGRAM SINCE 2006

In Guatemala, AHF provides primarily training and technical support. In 2006 AHF signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Ignacio Cohen Alcahe (ICA) Clinic in Xela to train medical providers, oversee medical care, and generally develop ICA's AIDS programs. In 2009, AHF will add human resource support to its current technical assistance role.

In 2008, AHF and its partners, Asociacion Salud Integral, IDEI, and PASMO, began widespread implementation of HIV mass testing in community settings. AHF's mass testing program is based on the Health Belief Model, which emphasizes the importance of eliminating cost, time, opportunity, and knowledge barriers to HIV/AIDS services. AHF's no-cost, 'rapid' testing technology is offered where at-risk populations conduct their day-to-day activities. A mobile testing unit is set up in a highly visible and busy location and outreach workers and signs remind individuals that they are at risk and encourage them to test. The model, designed to move clients through the system in 30 minutes, gives pre-test information in a group, minimizes post-test time with HIV-negative individuals, and links HIV-positive individuals into care. AHF and its partners performed 4,578 HIV tests at events organized around World AIDS Day 2008 and provided treatment referrals to those who tested positive (0.5%).

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AHF MODELS OF CARE

Models of Care:

Direct Care	Advocacy
Training	HIV Counseling & Testing

Current Partners:

IDEI Association	Rodolfo Robles National Hospital
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August 2009