HIV/AIDS Indicators at a Glance

Total population (2005) 184 mil
Adult HIV prevalence rate (2003) 0.61%
Estimated number of adults and children living with HIV/AIDS (2004) 600,000
Number of adults and children receiving ART: 161,000

Source: IBGE, UNAIDS, National AIDS Program

BACKGROUND

Brazil accounts for over a third of the reported AIDS cases in Latin America and the Caribbean. While the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Brazil is showing some signs of stabilization, heterosexual transmission and transmission through injecting drug use are increasing. The Ministry of Health reports that the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Brazil is becoming poorer, more feminine, and increasing in the interior of the country. Currently, 36 percent of all people living with HIV/AIDS in the country are women. The epidemic is most concentrated in urban areas and about 65 percent of HIV/AIDS infections occur in the states of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

The Brazilian response to AIDS has benefited from a strong political commitment and the fundamental participation of organized civil society. Brazil was the first developing country to guarantee universal access to antiretroviral drugs and treatment for opportunistic infections. Brazil is one of the leading countries in the implementation of the UNAIDS sponsored Three Ones initiative, which advocates for the adoption of one HIV/AIDS action framework, one national AIDS coordinating authority with a broad-based multisectoral mandate, and one country-level monitoring and evaluation system to coordinate the response for maximum impact.

PATHFINDER’S RESPONSE TO HIV/AIDS IN BRAZIL

Since 1979, Pathfinder Brazil has been working with governmental and non-governmental partners aimed at improving access of urban and rural populations to quality sexual and reproductive health services. Interventions initially carried out by Pathfinder in the area of sexual and reproductive health strongly contributed to the implementation of family planning services within the public health network, especially in the northeast region of Brazil. Most recent activities have been focusing primarily on HIV/AIDS prevention.

Pathfinder Brazil has played an important role in the introduction and dissemination of successful Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) and HIV/AIDS interventions, and the integration of STI and HIV/AIDS information into sexual and reproductive health programs. Pathfinder Brazil has also worked on prevention strategies, addressing populations with high risk of HIV infection, particularly men who have sex with men, transgender, female sex workers, drug users, adolescents, women, and people living with HIV/AIDS.

Interventions focus on capacity building, program management, social articulation, human resources training, and technical skills to produce and disseminate information, materials, and messages. Pathfinder’s programs focus

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2 National STD/HIV/AIDS Coordination. www.aids.gov.br
on advocacy, social mobilization, communication for individual and social behavioral change, social and family competencies (the ability of communities and families to mobilize available resources to confront problems), human sexuality, community development for structural changes, capacity building for leaders and peer educators, gender equality, community mobilization, establishing associations between different elements of civil society to stimulate structural change, harm reduction, and interaction with the media.

• **Partnerships with Brazilian Nongovernmental and Governmental Organizations**

In the past few years, Pathfinder has strengthened and expanded its technical support to Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) working in HIV/AIDS prevention. Most recently, Pathfinder implemented technical partnerships with national networks that work with and/or represent populations vulnerable to HIV infection. Such organizations include ABGLT (Brazilian Association of Gays, Lesbians and Transvestites), ANTRA (National Articulation of Transgender), RBP (Brazilian Network of Commercial Sex Workers), REDUC (Brazilian Network of Harm Reduction) and ABORDA (Brazilian Association of People Working with Harm Reduction).

From 2000 to 2003, Pathfinder, in a successful partnership with the northeast states of Bahia and Ceará, implemented a series of training workshops for doctors, nurses, dentists, and social workers in the state Family Health Program, focusing on the integration of STI and HIV/AIDS information into sexual and reproductive health services. After the end of activities, the curriculum adopted by the project was fully integrated into the official training agenda for health providers working with the state Family Health Programs.

In 2004 Pathfinder was selected to partner with the Bahia State Health Secretariat in the implementation of the State HIV/AIDS Plan of Action and Goals. Pathfinder is involved in the management of the civil society component, which implements prevention and care projects through HIV/AIDS NGOs working with vulnerable groups. In 2004 and 2005 Pathfinder provided managerial and technical support to a total of 38 NGO projects, 10 with people living with HIV/AIDS, three with female sex workers, five with men who have sex with men, five with transgendered people, eight with adolescents, six with women, and one focusing on harm reduction with drug users. Pathfinder’s partnership with the State Health Secretariat also provides technical assistance to the HIV/AIDS program in the areas of communication, epidemiological surveillance, pharmacies and drugs, and condom supply.

In early 2005, the National HIV/AIDS Program selected Pathfinder to integrate the Center for International Technical Cooperation in HIV/AIDS (CICT), a collaborative initiative of the Brazilian Ministry of Health with the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS. CICT will help expand and create local and sustainable technical capacities of national programs in developing countries, making them able to respond to the epidemic, and ensuring horizontal cooperation and exchange of knowledge.

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