

## FACTS AND FIGURES

- ▶ The first case of HIV infection in Belize was diagnosed in 1986. Today Belize has the highest rate of HIV infection per capita in Central America.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Of the total reported HIV infections between 1996-2003, seventy-seven percent of infections occurred in adults between the ages of 20 and 49 years.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ In the age group 15-24 years, 2.9 times more cases were reported for females than males.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Heterosexual transmission is reported as the leading mode of transmission.<sup>4</sup>
- ▶ In the age group 30-39 years, HIV and AIDS is the second leading cause of death after accidents.<sup>5</sup>

In 2005, the following figures were reported by the Surveillance Unit of the Ministry of Health:

CATEGORIES	1986 TO JUNE 2005	3RD QUARTER 2005 (figures for June-September)
Total reported cases of HIV infection	3,339	106
Total AIDS cases	763	13
Total AIDS-related deaths	586	16

<sup>1</sup> Pan American Health Organisation, Epidemiology Report on line at: <http://www.blz.paho.org/aids.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Belize Ministry of Health Annual Report, 2003

<sup>3</sup> National Health Information and Surveillance Unit (NHISU), HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Belize, Ministry of Health, Third Quarter, July-September 2005

<sup>4</sup> Ibid (figures based on 1986-1996)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid



## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- ▶ In December 2005, the National Policy on HIV/AIDS was endorsed by the Cabinet of Belize. This policy is complemented by a five year National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan for 2006- 2011. The NAC is collaborating with a wide range of agencies to implement the National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan.
- ▶ In 2004, the National AIDS Commission (NAC) became a statutory body with a mandate for coordinating, monitoring, advocating and developing policy for HIV and AIDS in Belize.
- ▶ Since 2003, the Ministry of Health has been offering free Anti-Retroviral Treatment to all Belizeans who medically qualify.
- ▶ Since 2002, the Ministry of Health has expanded its Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) programme making free VCT available to all Belizeans.

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