

# the healthadvisor

## DOH Mission:

To promote & protect the health & safety of all people in Florida.

Nov./Dec. 2003

## DOH begins initiative to increase dental care access

DOH RECENTLY AWARDED \$381,453 TO FOUR FLORIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENTS TO HELP DEVELOP OR EXPAND DENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS. The funds are part of a new initiative to increase access to dental care for low-income residents.

This year's recipients are Gadsden County Health Department (CHD), Hendry CHD, Leon CHD and Marion CHD.

Applications submitted to the state Public Health Dental Program by CHDs were evaluated based on several elements:

overview of the dental care problem; description of project, including proposed budget; community partnerships; impact on low-income population; cost effectiveness; and sustainability. A committee ranked the counties to determine how funds would be awarded. If available in subsequent fiscal years, funding will continue to be awarded for the development and/or expansion of the state's dental services.

**"Many people underestimate the importance of proper dental care," says Secretary Agwunobi. "This initiative reaches out to low-income residents who ordinarily cannot afford proper dental care."**

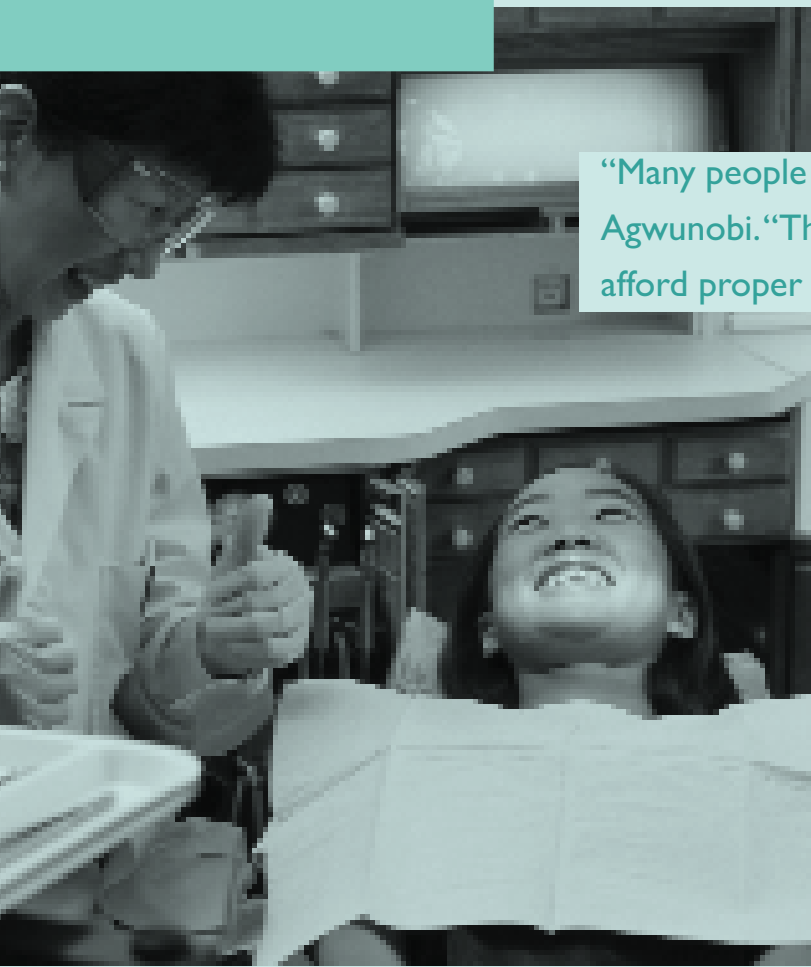
### FUNDING WAS ALLOCATED FOR THE FOLLOWING COUNTIES

**Gadsden CHD** \$73,153 to partner with North Florida Medical Centers to expand the existing dental clinic from three to five dental treatment rooms. Partners also include the University of Florida dental school and the Big Bend Area Health Education Center. The number of patients receiving care will double and the program will be self-sustaining when fully implemented.

**Hendry CHD** \$75,730 to partner with Florida Community Health Center, Inc., to expand the number of dental treatment rooms from three to four, to provide initial six-month staffing/expense support for a dental hygienist and an additional dental assistant, and to increase outreach activities. The number of patients receiving care will increase by 75 percent and the program will be self-sustaining at the end of the fiscal year.

**Leon CHD** \$125,400 to provide support for six new dental treatment rooms for its new facility, which should double the number of dental treatment. Partners include the Tallahassee Community College dental hygiene and assistant programs, the UF dental school whose students rotate through community-based programs in various locations in the state, a school system referral and transportation program, and facility support from the city and county. The expanded program is expected to see 2.5 times more patients.

**Marion CHD** \$107,170 to provide support for four new dental treatment rooms in the new Central Florida Community College facility. Partners include the community college dental assistant program, the UF dental school, and the community college's facility support. The expanded program has the potential to increase the number of patients receiving care three-fold, and when fully operational, the program is expected to be self-sustaining within several months.



## radioactive materials program earns top ranking

THE DEPARTMENT'S RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS PROGRAM OF THE BUREAU OF RADIATION CONTROL RECENTLY RECEIVED THE HIGHEST RATING POSSIBLE IN THE SEVEN CATEGORIES REVIEWED BY THE U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION. The commission's six-member assessment team performed a detailed review of areas that included staffing and training, licensing actions and inspections, and response to radiological incidents.

The Radioactive Materials Program licenses more than 1,400 users across the state, including hospitals, universities, industrial facilities, doctors, roofing companies, a food irradiator, and a medical product irradiator. The bureau implements 10 radiation protection programs involving X-ray machines, radioactive materials, environmental monitoring, and emergency response.

The programs have responsibilities in the regulation of radioactive materials, including the licensing of all facilities and users, inspecting licensee activities for compliance with safety requirements, and responding to incidents and accidents involving radioactive material. In 1964, the Atomic Energy Commission (now the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission) and the State of Florida signed an agreement empowering the state to license and regulate users of radioactive materials users.

Licensing staff members are responsible for reviewing submitted radioactive material license applications to insure radiation sources will follow regulations and be used in a safe manner. They participate in technical reviews of new uses of radioactive material, and respond to inquiries from licensees and the public.

Inspection staff members perform announced and unannounced compliance inspections and help educate licensees and the public about radiation issues. Before a



new license is issued, licensing staff or area inspectors make pre-license visits to ensure that licensees are adequately equipped and understand their responsibilities. Regular inspections range from every 6 months to 4 years, depending on the type of radioactive material used and the licensee's compliance history. Typically, teams conduct 550 to 600 radioactive material license inspections each year. Depending on the complexity of the license, the length of an inspection can range from one hour to one week.

Both licensing and inspection staff respond to radiation incidents occurring at licensed facilities, conduct investigations involving radioactive material, and participate in emergency response activities at Florida's nuclear power plants.

## world AIDS day continues “stigma and discrimination” theme

90,438

Cumulatively through 2002, 90,438 AIDS cases have been reported in Florida.

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Florida ranks third in the nation in the number of AIDS cases.

28,299

Of the cumulative number of AIDS cases, 47 percent are among blacks, 37 percent are among whites, and 15 percent are among Hispanics.

Cumulatively through 2002, 28,299 HIV cases have been reported, including 270 pediatric HIV cases. (Reporting of HIV was implemented July 1, 1997.)

56%

Of the cumulative number of HIV cases, 56 percent are among blacks, 27 percent are among whites, and 16 percent are among Hispanics.

Source: Florida Department of Health, Bureau of HIV/AIDS

WORLD AIDS DAY, DEC. 1, 2003, WILL REPEAT THE MESSAGES OF LAST YEAR'S THEME, "STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION," because these continue to be major factors that fuel the global HIV epidemic that create a climate of fear, ignorance and a reluctance to confront rising infection rates.

Since 1988, December 1 has been known as World AIDS Day and has become a primary vehicle for AIDS awareness. It has become one of the most successful international days with awareness raising activities locally, statewide and globally. AIDS organizations, community organizations and local health departments host events that capture the public's attention. World AIDS Day provides an opportunity for individuals to commit to themselves, their families and the community to be tested and learn their HIV status.

Florida has participated in the international event for many years. Activities across the state are based on the individual needs of communities, mostly organized by local AIDS service organizations, community-based organizations, county health departments, faith-based organizations, other social service agencies, entertainment groups, media and political entities.

Each year, agencies across the state host candlelight ceremonies, AIDS quilt displays, read names of those who have lost their fight against HIV and AIDS, conduct memorial services, health fairs, walks, and outreach and education events. Entertainment, food and reminiscing are also important functions that help educate the public and bring families and friends together to remember those that have gone on with the hopes that their passing is not in vain.

Individuals can show their support by volunteering in events sponsored by a local community-based organization, hospital or health department, or support local events simply by attending.

Contact your local health department and ask for the HIV/AIDS office or call a local community-based organization to offer help. Visit the Bureau of HIV/AIDS website for more information about World AIDS Day or to update yourself on the HIV/AIDS statistics at [http://www9.myflorida.com/disease\\_ctrl/aids/index.html](http://www9.myflorida.com/disease_ctrl/aids/index.html) or call the Florida HIV/AIDS Hotline toll-free at 1-800-FLA-AIDS.

Beth Swisher, Bureau of HIV/AIDS

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## pinellas CHD receives health and human services grant

Pinellas County Health Department recently received a five-year federal prevention and education grant in the amount of \$940,300 to implement community-based initiatives to promote better health and prevent disease. The grant is one of 12 Health and Human Services' grants awarded nationally totaling \$13.7 million to promote community health initiatives under the new Steps to a Healthier US program.

The Steps program aims to help Americans live longer, better, and healthier lives by reducing the burden of diabetes, overweight, obesity and asthma and addressing three related risk factors—physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and tobacco use. Diabetes, asthma, overweight and obesity were chosen as targets because of their rapidly increasing prevalence in the United States and the ability for individuals to control and even prevent these diseases through exercise, diet and other strategies.

Pinellas CHD will be the lead agency with oversight of individual projects in four cities in the county with a high incidence of diabetes, overweight, obesity and asthma.

"To successfully achieve better health, we need to reach Americans in the places they live, work and go to school," Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson said during the September grant award announcements. "Through these grants, we are supporting innovative and exciting programs across the country that will reduce the burden of diabetes, obesity and asthma on individual families, local communities and the country as a whole."

The number of people with diabetes in the United States has nearly doubled in the past decade to 17 million. An estimated 10 million adults and 5 million children suffer from asthma, and the number of cases of obesity in the United States has increased more than 50 percent over the past two decades.

Elaine Fulton-Jones, Pinellas County Health Department

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## MQA unlicensed activity unit captures prime attention

THE UNLICENSED ACTIVITY (ULA) UNIT OF THE DEPARTMENT'S DIVISION OF MEDICAL QUALITY ASSURANCE IS ATTRACTING NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ATTENTION FOR ITS AGGRESSIVE EFFORTS TO CURB FRAUDULENT HEALTH CARE ACTIVITY AND PROMOTE VICTIM SERVICES.

The recent attention includes that of ABC's Primetime. Correspondent Cynthia McFadden interviewed unlicensed investigator Tom Curry of the Ft. Lauderdale office about the unit's proactive work, how victims can get help, and how to report unlicensed activity. This report aired September 29.

Telemundo recently featured Carlos Llopis, a Spanish-speaking investigator in the Ft. Lauderdale office, in which Llopis advises the Hispanic community to verify their health care practitioner's license before an office visit. He also reminded people of the dangers associated with receiving health care from an unlicensed individual.

CBS Nightly News also has interviewed Curry and Llopis about the progressive Florida unit—an airdate has not been announced. Additionally, a British television station will be documenting the work of the ULA office over the next few months.

The attention comes as no surprise to those associated with the ULA unit. Florida has one of the only unlicensed activity offices in the country with dedicated resources necessary to effectively halt the potentially very dangerous activity.

"Unlicensed activity is a crime that puts the health of our citizens at risk," says Secretary Agwunobi. "The (recent) expansion of the ULA unit reflects our commitment to stopping the perpetrators performing unlicensed, unregulated health care services."

The ULA office in Ft. Lauderdale began in 1998 and recently opened offices in Tampa and West Palm Beach. The unit plans to continue its growth by opening offices in Jacksonville and Orlando in the near future.

The statewide-unlicensed activity program protects Florida residents and visitors from the potentially serious and dangerous consequences of receiving medical and health care services from an unlicensed person. MQA investigates and refers for prosecution all unlicensed health care activity complaints and allegations. The ULA unit works in conjunction with local law enforcement and the state attorney's offices to prosecute individuals practicing without a license. Unlicensed activity is a felony.

MQA provides several resources to combat unlicensed activity and has been promoting these services over the past several months to reach various audiences.

Consumers may review the license of any health care practitioner in the state of Florida at [www.doh-mqaservices.com](http://www.doh-mqaservices.com) and report a suspected unlicensed activity.

Complaints may be filed anonymously by completing the complaint form or calling 1-877-HALT-ULA.

Victims of unlicensed practice may contact the Florida Attorney General's Division of Victim Services at 1-800-226-6667.

Maureen Doherty, Office of Communications

## american diabetes association recognizes baker CHD's diabetes education program

THE AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION (ADA) RECENTLY AWARDED BAKER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT THE EDUCATION RECOGNITION CERTIFICATE FOR THE CHD'S QUALITY SELF-MANAGEMENT EDUCATION PROGRAM. Baker CHD is the first health department in Florida and among 11 health departments in seven states to achieve this credential. Recognition typically has been awarded to hospitals in urban areas.

ADA said Baker's program offers high-quality diabetes self-management education—an essential component of effective diabetes treatment.

Programs applying for recognition voluntarily submit to a rigorous review by experts in the field of diabetes who evaluate each program on its ability to provide patients with a comprehensive individualized education program. Programs that achieve recognition status must have a staff of knowledgeable health professionals who can provide participants with comprehensive information about diabetes management.

ADA Recognition for the program will allow the program to use the ADA endorsement logo on materials and be listed on the ADA website as a recognized program. Physicians often use this service to determine where to refer patients for diabetes education. The recognition also allows Baker CHD to bill Medicare and private insurance for diabetes education, which will assist with program costs.

In Baker County, recent statistics indicate 7.8 percent of adults have been diagnosed with diabetes. Baker also has the second highest diabetes death rate of Florida's 67 counties.

**Robin Dewey, Baker County Health Department**



## environmental health celebrates opening of technology-driven training center

THE DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ADDED A FEATHER TO ITS INNOVATION HAT WITH THE RECENT UNVEILING OF THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER (ERC) at a high-tech, ribbon-cutting ceremony. The words articulated by Secretary Agwunobi as he entered the room for the dedication said it all—"WOW!"

His response was similar to that of the more than 60 other guests who attended the "Matrix"-themed opening of the center. And prior to the September event, interest was peaked with a 45-second film invitation released on compact disc, complete with music and a pictorial preview of the room's development. The facility features 15 workstations and the latest technological tools for enhanced preparedness, communications and training activities, including everything from video and web conferencing capabilities to smart board and GIS/GPS mapping resources.



**Dressed for the opening of the state-of-the-art Educational Resource Center (ERC), from left, Bart Bibler, Wilson Carlile, Chris Duclos, Secretary Agwunobi, Dr. Lisa Conti, Kelly Nelson, Daniel Parker and Bill Reinhold.**

Once a second-floor storage/file room in the Division of Environmental Health, the ERC will serve as a fully equipped command center, providing support for homeland security and preparedness outreach as well as in-house and external training opportunities. The facility, which will be used department-wide, is the result of a year of feverish preparation and collaborative effort between the Division of Environmental Health, the Division of Emergency Medical Operations, Office of Public Health Preparedness, Division of Disease Control, Office of Performance Improvement, Office of Information Technology and Division of Administration.

A schedule of training sessions at the ERC will be developed and released in the near future.

**Elisia Norton, Division of Environmental Health**

## preventive health grant awarded to refugee health program

THE REFUGEE HEALTH PROGRAM IN THE DIVISION OF DISEASE CONTROL, BUREAU OF TB & REFUGEE HEALTH WAS AWARDED A THREE-YEAR REFUGEE PREVENTIVE HEALTH GRANT FROM THE OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$917,473 PER YEAR.

The funds will continue services to promote, administer, coordinate, and monitor health services for eligible new arrivals statewide. Local public health resources will be augmented to provide timely and comprehensive refugee health services with the primary focus of improving the health status of new arrivals so that they may achieve self-sufficiency in their new county.

The Refugee Health Program has received grant funding from the Office of Refugee Resettlement for the past seven years (prior to that, it was funded by the CDC). While many states across the country experienced a recent reduction in federal grant funding by as much as 66 percent, Florida experienced an 8 percent reduction.

Each year, Florida receives more refugees, asylees, or Cuban/Haitian entrants than any other state, averaging approximately 21,000 annually. This amount is nearly twice that of California, for example, and three times as many as New York state. Most of those who resettle in Florida originate from Cuba, Colombia or Haiti, and tend to resettle in one of eight Florida counties: Miami-Dade, Hillsborough, Palm Beach, Broward, Orange, Duval, Collier or Pinellas.

Prior to coming to the United States, individuals are required to have an overseas medical exam as part of the immigration process. However, because there may be a considerable lapse between a person's overseas exam and his/her actual departure for the United States, the Refugee Health Program offers new arrivals free domestic health examinations. This exam includes communicable disease screening, a general health assessment, and immunizations through the 67 Florida county health departments. As of January 2003, the program expanded its schedule of services to include tests for malaria, hepatitis C, lipid levels (high cholesterol), and sickle cell disease. Health education and hepatitis A vaccinations also are offered now to Refugee Health Program clients.

For additional information about the Refugee Health Program, please contact Laura A. Smith at (850) 245-4350.

**Jill Parker, Bureau of TB & Refugee Health**

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## "Store It. Don't Ignore It." during food safety month and always.

Proper food handling, preparation and storage were underscored in September during National Food Safety Education Month. To avoid contamination and help prevent food-borne illnesses, DOH offers four simple food storage tips: **Store It. Don't Ignore It.** Keep hot foods at 140 degrees Fahrenheit and cold foods at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or less.

**Don't Cross-Contaminate When You Refrigerate** Fight "cross-contamination"—the transfer of harmful bacteria to food from other foods, cutting boards or utensils if they are not handled properly. Never place any type of food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry or seafood. Also, store cooked foods above raw foods.

**When You Put Foods Away, Make Sure They Stay Properly Covered** Don't store foods uncovered.

**Keep Foods Up-Up and Away** Store dry foods at least 6 inches off of the floor and away from walls.

# people in public health

## tullos leads taylor CHD

Missouri transplant Stephen C. Tullos, M.P.P.A., joined DOH as administrator of Taylor County Health Department. His tenure in public and private health care spans more than 25 years, including a combined 20 years at the St. Louis and Taney county health departments.

As administrator of the Taylor County Health Department, Tullos is responsible for the oversight and supervision of public health programs throughout the county, and manages a \$1.7 million annual budget and more than 40 employees.

Tullos received his Bachelor of Science in biology/chemistry from Harding University in Arkansas and his Masters in Public Administration from the University of Missouri. He began work at the St. Louis County Department of Health serving in various environmental capacities. After nearly 20 years of service in the St. Louis County Health Department, he became Taney CHD administrator. He has also worked as the research administration program coordinator for Barnes Jewish Hospital.

## CMS employee receives national audiology award

Karen Anderson, Ph.D., audiology consultant for the Early Hearing Loss Detection and Intervention Project of Children's Medical Services, recently received the 2003 Frederick Berg Award from the National Educational Audiology Association (EAA) for her notable contributions to the field of educational audiology on a national level. The EAA is an international organization of audiologists and related professionals who deliver a full spectrum of hearing services to all children, particularly those in educational settings.

Anderson was honored for her contributions and achievements including:

**Author or co-author of six test instruments and materials for parents or educators of children with hearing loss that are available through the Educational Audiology Association.**

**Author of more than 35 refereed or non-refereed publications.**

**Author of more than 50 presentations with additional presentations currently in progress.**

**Active participant of the Federal American with Disabilities Access Board workgroup for developing the new classroom acoustics standard.**

**Active participant in the EAA including past president (1996), newsletter editor, conference committee chairperson, and products committee chairperson.**

Anderson has worked as an audiology consultant to the Early Hearing Loss Detection and Intervention Project in Children's Medical Services since November 2000. She was instrumental in coordinating activities related to Serving Hearing Impaired Newborns Effectively (SHINE), a component of Florida's early intervention system. SHINE provides families with supports and information about hearing loss after an initial diagnosis.

She earned her Master's degree at the University of Minnesota and recently completed her Doctorate in Communication Sciences and Disorders at Florida State University. For more information about services available for children with hearing or vision loss, please contact Anderson at (850) 245-4200 or by e-mail at Karen\_Anderson@doh.state.fl.us.

Children's Medical Services

## TB project to be featured in journal

The Bureau of TB & Refugee Health and the Hillsborough County Health Department partnered with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of TB Elimination on a project involving the use of a conceptual framework to evaluate TB Surveillance and Action Performance and Cost. A manuscript on this project has been accepted for publication in an upcoming issue in the Annals of Epidemiology.

The project looked at the measurement of TB Surveillance outcomes utilizing key performance indicators that correlate with specific TB activities that occur at the county health department level.

Jim Cobb, Chief of the Bureau of TB & Refugee Health

## employees receive FEHA awards

The following DOH employees received recognition from the Florida Environmental Health Association (FEHA) for their outstanding contributions to the profession. FEHA presents its annual awards, the highest honor given by the association, to assist in establishing and rewarding esprit de corps, devotion to duty, and dedication to public health among environmental health professionals. They were presented recently during FEHA's annual education meeting at Daytona Beach.

Sharon Saulter, an environmental specialist at Gadsden County Health Department (CHD), received FEHA's Rookie of the Year Award, which recognizes a member who has been employed in the environmental health field for less than 16 months.

Eliot Gregos, an environmental manager at Hillsborough CHD, received the Outstanding Environmental Health Professional Award, for his unusually successful accomplishments of an outstanding nature during the past year.

Roger Bergere, a very recent retiree from the environmental health section of Polk CHD, received the Charlie Rhodes Award for his outstanding contributions to the field over an extended period of time.

Dr. Roberta Hammond, an environmental administrator in the Bureau of Community Environmental Health in Tallahassee, received the Billy G. Tennant Award for her accomplishments in the field of environmental health over a long period of time.

Edith Coulter, Environmental Health and 2002-2003 FEHA Awards Committee Chairperson

## department advocates safety with expo

DOH employees and others who came to the Capital Circle Office Center (CCOC) on October 1 were exposed to information, demonstrations and tips during the "2003 Safety Expo." Sponsored by the Interagency Advisory >>>

## the advisor

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Please send stories & information for the Jan./Feb. issue by e-mail to Juli Bergstrom-Wasson in the Office of Performance Improvement by Dec. 1, 2003.

The Health Advisor is available on the DOH Intranet & Internet websites.

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>>> Council on Loss Prevention, DOH's Safety Committee took the lead in planning the event. Displays covered the issues of fire safety, vehicle safety, disaster preparedness, computer safety and insurance coverage. The purpose for the event is to enhance employee safety awareness and reduce insurance claims within the state system.

Uneeda Brewer, Bureau of General Services

## collins chosen to lead martin CHD

Raymond E. Collins, M.P.H., is the newly selected administrator of Martin County Health Department. Collins has a career in public health that spans more than 25 years.

Collins received his Bachelor of Science from The University of Central Florida in 1978 and his Masters in Public Health in 1984. He began his public health career as a field inspector and worked as an environmental specialist, supervisor and director from 1978 through 1990 at the county level. In 1990, he began work at the state level as an administrator and DOH bureau chief. In 1997, he was promoted to superintendent and chief executive officer of A.G. Holley Hospital where he administered a \$10 million budget and supervised 175 employees.

As administrator of Martin CHD, Collins is responsible for the oversight and supervision of public health programs throughout the county. He is charged with the management of a \$6.3 million budget and more than 130 employees.