

### Public Health Area 8 Administrator Takes Stand on Clean Indoor Air

Under the leadership of Public Health Area 8 Administrator James Martin, all PHA 8 county health departments are transitioning to smoke-free campuses. To protect the health of staff, visitors and clients entering the buildings, all indoor areas and 50 feet from all entrances are now smoke-free. PHA 8 includes health departments in Chilton, Autauga, Elmore, Montgomery, Macon, Bullock, Lee and Russell counties. Martin said he hopes Public Health Area 8 serves as a model for the rest of the state.

The smoke-free policy was drafted in 2006 with the assistance of Demetra Peoples, tobacco prevention and control coordinator for PHA 8. According to Martin, providing employees who smoke with cessation services and support is a priority and an integral component of the policy. The rationale behind the transitional approach was to give employees and clients time to seek treatment and adapt to the new environment, he said. Martin said the process was based on Mobile County's implementation of a smoke-free campus.

According to Martin, most employees, clients and visitors are respectful of the policy and have adapted quickly. Prior to the 50-foot limit, it was common to see smokers gathering near entrances at the Montgomery County Health Department. After implementation of the policy, Martin noticed that most smokers extinguished their cigarettes before leaving the parking lot. Once it became the "norm" not to smoke near the buildings, the occasional violator became the center of onlookers' attention. The policy has been self-enforcing. A smoker who forgot to extinguish his cigarette was observed quickly snuffing it out and placing the butt in his pocket, Martin said.

The next phase will be prohibiting smoking in the parking lots. Prior to this, Martin plans to conduct a campaign to educate staff, visitors and patients about the upcoming change. All will receive information packets about the Quitline, a toll-free smoking cessation service from the Alabama Department of Public Health.

This information will be distributed along with educational handouts and flyers detailing the new policy and effective date. All clients coming in for appointments will receive the packet of information. Clients may visit the ADPH web site, [www.adph.org/tobacco](http://www.adph.org/tobacco), for more information about cessation and community programs, as well as a listing of cities with smoke-free ordinances.

With education and adequate notice, Martin said he is confident smokers will adjust and PHA 8 health departments will be one step closer to becoming smoke-free campuses.

For additional information, visit our website at [www.adph.org/tobacco/](http://www.adph.org/tobacco/) or call Susan Altman at (334) 206-2776.



*Public Health Area 8  
Administrator James Martin*