

John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A., M.P.H.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH & STATE HEALTH OFFICER • FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



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John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A., M.P.H., was named Florida's Secretary of Health, by Governor Jeb Bush, in October 2001. As Secretary, Dr. Agwunobi moved the Department of Health towards excellence—pushing for increased efficiency, customer focus and productivity. He leads the call for a healthier Florida, advocating for improved nutrition and exercise in an effort to address the state's epidemic of overweight and obesity. Dr. Agwunobi continues to focus on the state's disease control efforts and maternal and child health initiatives. He is currently working to decrease the state's infant mortality rate, lower tobacco use among young Floridians, diminish racial and ethnic health disparities, and improve overall access to medical and dental care.

The day after being named Secretary of Health, Dr. Agwunobi led the department in its response to the nation's first-ever intentional anthrax attack. Dr. Agwunobi has since guided the state of Florida's efforts to prepare for, prevent, respond to and mitigate the effects of a bioterrorism attack.

Dr. Agwunobi has a wealth of experience in health care delivery, managed care, health policy, and public health. In 1990, he moved to Washington, DC, where he completed his pediatric residency at Howard University Hospital. His training included rotating between Children's National Medical Center and the District of Columbia General Hospital—then one of the nation's busiest inner-city hospitals. It was there that Dr. Agwunobi became interested in children with disabilities and patients with special needs, particularly in urban communities.

A Passion for Leadership and Commitment to Excellence in Public Health

In June 1993, Dr. Agwunobi joined the medical staff at the Hospital for Sick Children, a Washington, DC-based pediatric rehabilitation hospital and community health care provider. He became Medical Director in July 1998, and a year later, was named Vice President of Medical Affairs and Patient Services. He simultaneously served as medical director for an affiliated managed care plan, where he maintained a network of more than 2,300 physicians and specialists.

Dr. Agwunobi has been the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including Administrator of the Year, Public Health Hero Citation, and Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters. He was also appointed as Chair of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Advisory Committee, the Board of Directors of the National Quality Forum—an advisory group formed at the recommendation of the President's Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry, and the Board of Directors of the Scripps Florida Funding Corporation—a non-profit corporation created to facilitate the establishment and operation of a biomedical research institution in Florida.

Born in Dundee, Scotland, Dr. Agwunobi attended medical school at the University of Jos, Nigeria, where his father—a British-trained physician—was a professor of surgery. In addition to his father, Dr. Agwunobi credits his grandfather, Dr. John Shaw, for much of his passion for serving people with illness. His grandfather continued to care for his patients as a family practitioner despite going blind as a result of diabetes in the prime of his career.

As a pediatrician, Dr. Agwunobi practiced in rural, inner city and suburban communities, where he dedicated his practice to working with underserved populations.

In addition to his medical degree, Dr. Agwunobi holds a Master of Business Administration degree from Georgetown University in Washington, DC, and a Master of Public Health degree from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health in Baltimore, MD. Dr. Agwunobi is also a certified managed care executive.

Dr. Agwunobi has a passion for leadership and innovation and sees his role of Secretary of Health as one of team building, public service, and quality improvement of the public health care system.
