

2009

## COMMUNITY HEALTH LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT

### **C. Mark Nichols, D.D.S.**

Vice President for Clinical Affairs,

**BERING OMEGA COMMUNITY SERVICES**

In the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, as information emerged on HIV/AIDS transmission, many dentists completely abandoned their AIDS patients. Dr. Nichols was one of the few dentists willing to treat AIDS patients. He, along with three other volunteer dentists, established the Bering Dental Clinic (BDC) in 1987.

As the first such clinic in the United States, BDC's first major accomplishment was the creation of appropriate procedures and standards for working with AIDS patients. Known as Universal Precautions, the procedures served to address critical safety issues for health care workers. Dr. Nichols and his colleagues disseminated this knowledge through training, demonstrations, and publishing, which opened the door to oral health care for people with HIV and AIDS worldwide.

Since then, Dr. Nichols and his staff have literally been the first, or among the first, to identify and treat each new oral health problem unique to people with compromised immune systems. Dr. Nichols has continued to publish his findings and teach his techniques to dentists and physicians across Houston, the United States, and around the world. Under his leadership and international outreach and recognition, the Bering Dental Clinic was designated a United Nations model program—and dentists, government health officials, and clients from all over the world come to learn from or be treated by him.



**BeringOmega**  
Community Services

