



# BRIGHTERWAY

INSTITUTE

## **A Transformational Mission**

*We are committed to excellence*

Brighter Way Institute, an Arizona-based 501 (c)(3), has a transformational mission to provide comprehensive oral health care for vulnerable veterans, adults, children, those experiencing homelessness, and individuals with special needs. Founded by Dr. Kris Volcheck in 2001, Brighter Way initially operated as a pilot project out of a small trailer located at the Key Campus formerly known as the Human Services Campus in downtown Phoenix and has expanded in the community since that time. The organization will be celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2026.

## **Transforming Adult Oral Healthcare through Partnerships**

*Thunderbirds Charities Institute for Implantology*

Since inception, finding affordable solutions to address the complex oral health needs of thousands of uninsured adults in our community has been our greatest challenge. At the Brighter Way Dental Center located on the Key Campus in Phoenix, BWI serves low-income and homeless adults, with over 30% Veterans. Approximately 78% of residents living in our service area are 200% below Federal Poverty Level with an average annual income of \$24,957 (AZ Department of Health Services) With substantially different and more complex problems than children, there's a greater need for extensive surgical and restorative procedures that may include bone/tooth sectioning, surgical bone replacement grafts, tissue regeneration procedures for implant placement, and extractions.

In FY2020, BWI completed a major 2,521 sq. ft. build out renovation, furnished through extensive in-kind equipment donations from national & international partners and renovated through a major donation from Thunderbirds Charities. A program expansion was predicated on this major renovation and this work laid the foundation for future efficiencies, growth, infrastructure stability, and sustainability, providing a unique niche in nonprofit dentistry.



## **Post Doctorate Oral Implantology Residency Program**

*Jacksonville University Collaboration*

Certification through CODA (Commission on Dental Accreditation) and an AEGD (Advanced Education General Dentistry) training site, qualified BWI as one of the inaugural 15 Jacksonville University Clinical Training Affiliate sites for a new two-year post-doctoral Oral Implantology Program (MSc Dentistry & Certificate in Oral Implantology). The pilot project started July 2022 with one resident and in 2024, has grown to three residents.

With immense skills in service to indigent patients, Dr. R. Todd Erickson, DDS, MS, is the Institute's Program Director and the only dually certified oral and maxillofacial surgeon and radiologist in the country.

Supported by the Comprehensive Oral Implantology Residency Foundation (COIRF), this 24-month residency program is recognized as using the American Academy of Implant Dentistry (AAID) post-graduate core curriculum for dental implantology.

Residents receive extensive training focused on clinical proficiency in surgery, prosthetics, and maintenance as related to dental implants and comprehensive oral implantology.

Implant dentistry is a unique specialty that goes beyond the scope of general dentistry. It encompasses surgical, periodontal, prosthetic, and long-term maintenance. Residents within this program are taught the revolutionary reconstruction of the entire oral masticatory process – bone, soft tissue, and teeth – utilizing implants and dental restorations.

This Brighter Way initiative increases capacity for complex services, providing an unprecedented level of specialized care, and opportunities for growth. By the end of our pilot on June 30, 2023, we provided complex oral health services to 2,729 patients. By the end of FY2023, we provided 25,890 services to 3,452 adult patients.

