



2023 · FIFTEENTH ANNUAL
SEDATION
SAFETY WEEK

2022 Winner, Dr. Nilo Hernandez

2022 Safe Sedation Dentist of the Year: Nilo Hernandez, DDS

Many of the dentists considered for the 14th Annual Safe Sedation Week Dentist of the Year have long and full careers in the industry, but it's unlikely that any of them started in elementary school, as 2022 honoree Nilo Hernandez, DDS did.

When the Miami, FL native was a child, he spent many after-school hours at his uncle's dental office. To keep the 8-year-old busy, his uncle would give him some wax and a Bunsen burner with instructions to make something – and not burn the building down. Young Nilo was soon receiving compensation for his impressions and denture repair work.

"I was the richest kid on the block," laughs Dr. Hernandez, recalling how much candy \$20 could buy back then.

Realizing he liked working with tools, Dr. Hernandez went to dental school after a brief stint as an auto mechanic. He received dual degrees, one foreign and the second at Creighton University in Nebraska in 1991, where he planned to settle down before his father convinced him to return to Florida.

SmileCreator of Alabama is Dr. Hernandez's current practice where he offers a large array of holistic dental services, including implants, oral surgery, periodontal therapy, and [biological technology](#). The clearest common denominator of his many treatment options is easily sedation (soon to be added here).

Sedation Advocate

Dr. Hernandez was one of the first students to join DOCS Education in 2001, an organization dedicated to sedation safety, and he can't endorse the practice of sedation dentistry enough.

"Somebody has got to be sedated – either them or me," he jokes before adding simply, "It helps me do better dentistry." From reducing salivary flow to eliminating time-expending conversation, he finds everything good about sedation, especially with holistic patients who tend to be more "involved."



Dr. Nilo Hernandez

In 2018 Dr. Hernandez added IV sedation to his arsenal and is unequivocal in his stance on the service.

“I tell every single person (dentist) the single most relevant thing they can do in their practice – short of opening the doors and having electricity for the lights – is to become certified in IV sedation.” He adds that, “The money is secondary, but handle the fear and they’ll get more patients.”

Dr. Hernandez is not only passionate about his patients but helping other dentists as well. In addition to heading five or more practices over the years, he has also been active in teaching, lecturing, and publishing articles. Being bilingual in English and Spanish has allowed him to speak at seminars around the world on topics such as prosthetic rehabilitation. His tenures as Chairman of Dade County Dental Research Clinic and Co-Director of the Robert Morgan Dental Implant Institute have expanded implant dentistry in his own practice and countless others.

A Natural Progression

Dr. Hernandez’s interest in holistic dentistry, and the belief that the whole body is connected, has resulted in a natural progression to other businesses in the dental industry. These ventures include biologics research and implants, as well as a new office in Alabama where he’ll be taking over research and documentation on techniques and systems he developed. Although he’s had a home in Alabama for a few years, he’ll soon be relocating there full-time.

“I’m supposed to be retiring, but that’s kind of a misnomer,” says Dr. Hernandez, explaining that he has sold the Naples practice and will be stepping away in July of 2022.

The office will remain open with a new dentist in place, and he is hopeful that they will bring the same enthusiasm for and experience with sedation dentistry that he has. Both of Dr. Hernandez’s long-time assistants have taken the required training to be IV-certified as well.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, the last two years have been the practice’s busiest yet, and he estimates they performed over 2,000 implants in that period. Dr. Hernandez contends that dentists took mitigation steps other professions didn’t, and this contributed to their success and safety.

Do Good

Although recent health issues have contributed to Dr. Hernandez taking a step back – from scuba diving, that is – he is looking forward to spending more time lakeside in Alabama with his wife and two grown children and enjoying his photography hobby.

When asked about the rewarding aspects of his work, it's not surprising that the dentist who first claimed he got his degree from eBay, says, "We have a lot of fun."

He adds, earnestly, "I love taking care of patients the right way and them having a spectacular experience, then thanking me. Do good and it just comes back to you."

Great advice, Dr. Hernandez.