

Healthcare & Institutional Partnerships

Independent in mission. Connected to the healthcare community.

The clinic is proposed as an independent nonprofit organization, but it is not intended to operate in isolation. During Phase 0, the governing board will evaluate relationships with hospitals and health systems, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Health Center Program Look-Alikes, universities and dental schools, rehabilitation programs, disability organizations, and other community healthcare providers.

These relationships may strengthen referral pathways, medical-dental care coordination, access to higher-acuity treatment when required, professional education, grant opportunities, and long-term sustainability.

FQHC strategy: an option to evaluate, not a prerequisite to launch

The clinic's focus on patients with disabilities and medical complexity does not by itself establish FQHC status. Phase 0 should determine whether direct Health Center Program participation, Look-Alike designation, or a formal relationship with an existing health center would improve access and sustainability while remaining compatible with the clinic's specialized care model.

No current hospital, university, health-system, FQHC, or FQHC Look-Alike affiliation is assumed in the business plan, and none is required before the concept can be evaluated or launched as an independent nonprofit.

Questions to be tested during Phase 0

- Would alignment with an existing FQHC or health system improve referral access, reimbursement, grant eligibility, or clinical infrastructure?
- Would the governance, service-area, sliding-fee, and other Health Center Program requirements fit the clinic's specialized disability-care mission?
- Which hospitals or qualified outpatient facilities are appropriate partners for patients requiring general anesthesia or higher-acuity support?
- Can universities or dental schools support training, rotations, continuing education, research, or workforce development?
- Which rehabilitation and disability organizations can strengthen referral pathways and patient-navigation support?

Federal liability distinction. Health Center Program Look-Alike designation alone does not provide FTCA malpractice coverage. FTCA protection is tied to eligible funded health centers that satisfy HRSA's deeming requirements. Any liability, governance, reimbursement, or affiliation strategy should therefore be reviewed by qualified healthcare and nonprofit counsel during Phase 0.