

Arizona Autism Charter Schools Receives \$355,000 Grant; Launches State's First Autism

Written by Mallory Gleich

Wednesday, 17 September 2025 13:04 -



autismcharter.org (AZACS), the state's only tuition-free public charter network specifically serving students with autism, has been awarded a \$355,000 Community Reinvestment Grant from Mercy Care through its 2025 Mercy C.A.R.E.S. program. The funding will support the development of the **Autism Spectrum Wellness Center**, Arizona's first primary care medical clinic dedicated to individuals on the autism spectrum.

Set to open on AZACS's main Phoenix campus, the Center will provide specialized, integrated healthcare to both children and adults with autism. It is designed to address the often complex and overlapping medical and behavioral needs faced by this community.

"The wellness center will set a statewide precedent for delivering integrated, high-quality medical and behavioral health care tailored to the unique needs of individuals with autism," said Trisha Stuart, director of community relations at Mercy Care. "It will provide comprehensive services, including routine care, behavioral support, and specialized accommodations, to thousands of patients and their families."

The Center will be operated by [Valle del Sol](#), a healthcare provider with more than 50 years of experience in delivering culturally responsive services. Its location on the AZACS campus will ensure easy access for nearly 600 enrolled students and their families, while also welcoming members of the wider community who need autism-informed care.



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"Our students and families are accustomed to receiving the highest quality educational services tailored to their unique needs. Via this innovative partnership with Valle del Sol, we are thrilled to help ensure these same students and other community members with autism will also have convenient access to outstanding, compassionate primary care," said Ron Harrison, interim CEO of Arizona Autism Charter Schools.

The Autism Spectrum Wellness Center will be staffed by bilingual professionals and follow Valle del Sol's holistic care model. Its interdisciplinary team will collaborate across education and healthcare to support individuals with complex medical needs, such as seizure disorders, gastrointestinal issues, and anxiety. The goal is to provide seamless, continuous care that improves health outcomes and supports overall well-being.

"Meeting the complex healthcare needs our students often face - including seizure disorders, eating challenges and more - can have a profound impact on their ability to attend school consistently, stay focused, and thrive both academically and personally," said Harrison. "We are so thankful to Mercy Care and the Mercy C.A.R.E.S. Community Reinvestment Grant Program for its generous financial support that is making this Autism Spectrum Wellness Center possible."



Beyond primary care, the Center will offer preventive services, health education, peer support groups, and wraparound resources for families and caregivers. The comprehensive approach aims not only to improve clinical outcomes but also to enhance the day-to-day quality of life for those on the spectrum and their loved ones.

The Autism Spectrum Wellness Center represents a critical step forward in ensuring individuals with autism receive the specialized, compassionate care they deserve - right in the heart of a school community built to serve them. Learn more at autismcharter.org.