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**PDS® Foundation Dentists for Special Needs Celebrates World Autism Awareness Day & National Autism Awareness Month**

*Groundbreaking new dental clinic for patients with special needs opens in Phoenix*

PHOENIX, Ariz. April 2, 2019 – The [Pacific Dental Services® Foundation Dentists for Special Needs](https://www.pdsfoundation.org/programs/special-needs/dentists-for-special-needs/) recognizes [World Autism Awareness Day](http://www.un.org/en/events/autismday/) (April 2) and [National Autism Awareness Month](http://www.autism-society.org/get-involved/national-autism-awareness-month/) following the opening of its brand new dental practice just for patients with special needs. The new clinic provides high quality oral health care for children and adults with physical and intellectual disabilities, including [Autism Spectrum Disorder](https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism) (ASD). ASD refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication. Since its launch in 2007, World Autism Awareness Day has brought increased awareness about the challenges people with autism face every day. In addition, National Autism Awareness Month is an opportunity to promote acceptance for those living with autism.

“We understand the challenges that individuals on the autism spectrum face when it comes to seeing the dentist,” said Kyle Guerin, Director, Foundation and Corporate Responsibility.  “Dental offices tend to cause sensory overload for patients on the spectrum, with the lights, sounds, and people in the room. We’ve created a warm, calming, patient-centered environment to put both our patients and their caregivers at ease.  Our goal is to not only take care of our patients’ needs in the practice, but also give them the behavioral skills to continue to improve oral health outside the office.” To schedule an appointment for the PDS Foundation Dentists for Special Needs clinic, click [**HERE**](https://www.pdsfoundation.org/programs/special-needs/dentists-for-special-needs/).

The [Centers for Disease Control](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html) states that autism affects an estimated 1 in 59 children in the United States. Overall, more than 52 million people in the U.S. have special needs. Unfortunately, less than 10% of dentists treat patients with disabilities because of their lack of training and the patients’ negative reactions to common dental procedures.

The new clinic offers patients sensory-integrated operatories and state-of-the-art technology, as well as specially-trained dentists equipped with behavioral and environmental techniques to ensure successful patient visits. Patients receive comprehensive oral health care including crowns, fillings, hygiene, implants, root canals, and oral surgery, and will also be provided with emergency care if needed. In addition, the not-for-profit clinic, which was founded by the [PDS Foundation](https://www.pdsfoundation.org/), will provide patients and their caregivers with education to help them with their oral health in between visits. The Foundation has been leading the charge to make dentistry more accessible to people with special needs through training and advocacy. The Foundation’s leadership understands that caring for patients with special needs takes not only special training, but also compassion.

The PDS Foundation Dentists for Special Needs clinic is part of the PDS Foundation’s mission to improve oral healthcare for all patients, one person at a time.

Contact the PDS Foundation Dentists for Special Needs clinic today:

(602) 344-9530│DentistsforSpecialNeeds.com

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**About Pacific Dental Services® Foundation**

The Pacific Dental Services Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization whose mission is to create opportunities to serve through improving oral healthcare locally, nationally and internationally. By creating opportunities to serve, the PDS Foundation positively enhances the lives of those in need, and in turn, those who serve. The Foundation provides access and advocacy to disadvantaged and underserved communities in four key areas: PDS Foundation Mobile Dental Clinic, Special Needs Advocacy and Training, Oral Health Scholarships, and International Trips. For more information, visit [www.pdsfoundation.org](http://www.pdsfoundation.org).

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