

OASIS · AT A GLANCE

MI-CARE Clinic and other IDD-affirming care models

Fifteen-minute appointments and rushed exam rooms fail autistic adults in specific, predictable ways. A handful of Michigan clinics built something different. Most families never hear about them until they've already given up on finding decent care.

BY JIM PALASTY · 10 MIN READ · WHAT A HEALTHCARE VISIT IS SUPPOSED TO FEEL LIKE

45

MINUTE APPOINTMENTS AT MI-CARE, VERSUS 15 ELSEWHERE

University of Michigan's MI-CARE Clinic gives adults with autism and IDD three to four times the appointment length of a standard primary care visit. That single change reshapes everything else about the visit.

How it works

THREE STEPS

STEP 1

The 15-minute problem

Standard primary care visits aren't built for communication differences, sensory needs, or complex medical histories.



STEP 2

A different model exists

MI-CARE Clinic at the University of Michigan was built specifically around the needs of autistic and IDD adults.



STEP 3

It's not the only one

MSU, Helen DeVos in Grand Rapids, and Beaumont all run comparable IDD-affirming programs worth knowing about.

IDD-affirming care models in Michigan

MI-CARE Clinic	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, adults 18 and older
MSU DD Clinic	Michigan State University, developmental disabilities focus
Helen DeVos Adult Transition Clinic	Grand Rapids, transition-focused IDD care
Beaumont developmental medicine	Metro Detroit, developmental medicine programs
Your local provider	Ask directly about extended visits and accommodations

THE FIRST APPOINTMENT WHERE NOBODY RUSHED

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Marcus had spent a decade watching doctors lose patience with his son's communication needs inside standard fifteen-minute visits, appointments that ended before real questions could even be asked. Their first MI-CARE visit ran fifty minutes. The provider used his son's AAC device without prompting, built in processing time between questions, and sent a written summary home afterward. Marcus described it as the first time a doctor's office had felt built for his son instead of merely tolerating him.

FIFTY MINUTES CHANGED WHAT WAS POSSIBLE INSIDE THAT APPOINTMENT. FIFTEEN NEVER HAD.

What matters, at a glance

MICHIGAN SPECIFIC

45 to 60 minute visits

Three to four times the length of a typical 15-minute primary care appointment, built into the model from the start.

Communication support built in

AAC accommodation and communication support are standard practice, not a special request that has to be fought for.

Most families don't know it exists

Even Michigan families who've spent years hunting for competent care often never hear about MI-CARE until word of mouth finally reaches them.

Medical home coordination

Care coordination with specialists and community providers happens as a structural feature, not something a family has to manage alone.

Accepts Medicaid

Located in Ann Arbor, serving adults 18 and older with autism or IDD, and accepting Medicaid and most insurance.

Not the only option

MSU's Developmental Disabilities Clinic, Helen DeVos in Grand Rapids, and Beaumont's developmental medicine program all offer comparable approaches.

BRING THESE · CHECK AS YOU GO

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| ☐ A list of current medications, diagnoses, and specialists | ☐ Communication preferences and any AAC device information |
| ☐ Sensory needs (lighting, waiting room noise, exam room setup) | ☐ A one-page medical passport summarizing all of the above |
| ☐ Contact information for the nearest IDD-affirming clinic to you | |

YOUR MOVE

When you're looking for IDD-affirming healthcare, here is where to start

- 1 Ask whether MI-CARE, MSU, DeVos, or Beaumont serve your region.
- 2 If none are geographically feasible, call your current provider directly.
- 3 Ask specifically about extended appointment length.
- 4 Ask about AAC and communication accommodations by name.
- 5 Request written visit summaries after every appointment.
- 6 Build a one-page medical passport to bring to every visit.

Fifteen minutes was never enough. Fifty minutes proves it didn't have to be this way.

RESOURCES NAMED IN THIS POST

See the full post for linked resources.

Informational only. Not legal or medical advice. Verify current program rules before acting.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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