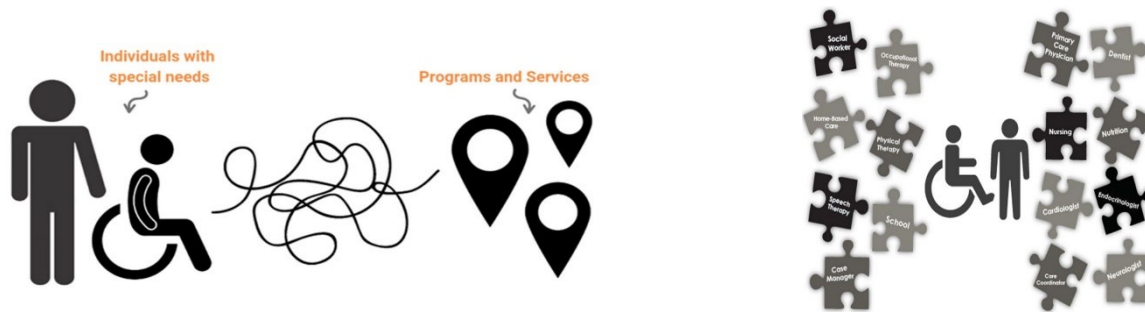




## Collaborative Care and Coordinated Services for Individuals with Disabilities and Special Needs in San Antonio, Texas – 'Inclusion City, USA'

### Background:

All too often, individuals with disabilities and special needs get fragmented, uncoordinated health and social services from providers spread out all over the community. They often feel they do not have the support or knowledge needed to identify and navigate through their services options. As a result, they become overwhelmed by the complexities facing them and sometimes fall through the cracks. Many eventually give up. When this happens, instead of improving their health and quality of life, they regress or remain in limbo.



The solution is the Multi-Assistance Center at Morgan's Wonderland, or The MAC. This unique endeavor constitutes a coordinated approach to providing medical and non-medical services to children and adults with disabilities and special needs. The MAC Care Model™ is focused on addressing Non-Medical Drivers of Health (NMDOH) through team members known as MAC Navigators, that serve as guides, or single points of contact, for individuals with special needs and disabilities. Navigators not only guide these individuals, or MAC Members, to service providers at The MAC and in the community but also track progress and schedule follow-ups through The MAC Navigation System (MAC Nav), an electronic platform.

The colorful, three-story, \$54 million building, located in Northeast San Antonio near world-renowned Morgan's Wonderland theme park, partners with more than 30 community-based organizations and providers, or MACers, working together to address the multi-faceted needs of individuals with cognitive and physical special needs. As The MAC moves forward, its network of MACers will expand to address an even wider range of challenges confronting those with special needs and disabilities.

Under The MAC Care Model™, service delivery to MAC Members is comprehensive, complementary, and synergistic, thus providing a better experience for individuals with disabilities and special needs as well as better outcomes through improved coordination and communication among the different service providers. The MAC is a person- and family-centered, efficient, holistic, and integrated practice. It's a bold new approach to solving many and varied problems affecting those with disabilities and special needs.



The MAC is an outgrowth of successful ventures to benefit the disability and special-needs community by Morgan’s Inclusion Initiative of San Antonio, Texas. The nonprofit umbrella organization coordinates planning, fundraising and communications among a “family” that includes Ultra-Accessible™, fully-inclusive Morgan’s Wonderland, award-winning Morgan’s Inspiration Island splash park, Morgan’s Wonderland Camp and Morgan’s Wonderland Sports complex. Because of these and similar inclusive endeavors to help citizens with disabilities and special needs, the City Council in 2015 proclaimed San Antonio as “Inclusion City, USA.”



**The Approach: A Community-Driven, Collective-Impact Model**

No single organization can address the broad range of services required by individuals with disabilities and special needs. Thus, the whole community of service providers has banded together into a collective-impact model where collaboration makes it easier for those with disabilities and special needs to receive services. Coordination among more than 30 MAC-affiliated organizations means greater synergy and follow-through for better care. Data-driven and outcomes-based, The MAC believes measuring and reporting progress are key to assessing effectiveness and making future improvements to benefit MAC Members.



Nine committees guiding The MAC reflect a community-driven approach:

1. **The MAC Navigation Committee:** comprised of organizations that provide guidance to the Navigator function of guiding MAC Members to service providers (and keeping track of them).
2. **The MAC Member Committee:** comprised of MAC Members and families of individuals with disabilities and special needs that provide feedback and help guide activities and development of services at The MAC.
3. **The MAC Autism Committee:** comprised of key community stakeholders and providers that play a vital role in the development and delivery of the autism services at The MAC.
4. **The MAC Legal Home Committee:** comprised of key community stakeholders and practitioners that play a vital role in the development and delivery of the legal services available at The MAC.
5. **The MAC Medical Home Committee:** comprised of key community stakeholders and providers that play a vital role in the development and delivery of the medical home services at The MAC.
6. **The MAC Therapy Home Committee:** comprised of key community stakeholders and providers that play a vital role in the development and delivery of the therapy services at The MAC.
7. **The MAC Employment Center Committee:** comprised of community organizations that assist with job readiness and strive to ensure gainful employment and economic stability for individuals of all ability levels.
8. **The MAC Evaluation and Research Coordinating Center Committee:** Led by researchers and analysts from the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) to provide MAC Care Model™ evaluation results through outcomes research and analysis. In addition, the committee serves as a central point for identifying, facilitating, and conducting research of interest to The MAC and its stakeholders.
9. **The MAC Chair Committee:** comprised of chairs from The MAC committees to ensure communications, updates and best practices flow between the different MAC Committees and service lines.

### **What Is a 'Special Need?'**

For The MAC, a person with a "special need" is defined as an individual of any age with a long-term impairment of cognitive, sensory, motor and/or communication function(s), either congenital or acquired, that is not readily rehabilitated. Furthermore, a special need substantially limits an individual's ability to perform activities in the range of what is considered typical for a person of the same age and cultural context. A special need may result in associated social, behavioral, or mental health complexities, requiring specialized intervention by a professional.



## The Need

The disability and special needs population in San Antonio and Bexar County that can benefit from The MAC is large and growing. A March 2019 report by the Texas Workforce Investment Council titled "People with Disabilities: A Texas Profile" indicated 297,255 individuals with a special need in Bexar County, or 15 percent of the total population. Adding the special-needs populations of the seven contiguous counties (Atascosa, Wilson, Kendall, Comal, Medina, Bandera, Guadalupe) increased the total to 369,558, also 15 percent of the combined population of the seven counties. Similar significant totals exist in other areas of the state and nation.

## Mission and Vision

**Mission** – Improve the lives of individuals with disabilities and special needs through comprehensive and coordinated services in a centralized setting. Services are delivered through a family-centered approach with collaboration from the family, MAC Member, and community partners.

**Vision** – Offer a new way to efficiently deliver an array of integrated and coordinated services that provide value to individuals with disabilities and special needs and their families, as well as other relevant community stakeholders.

## Core Values:

- **Empower:** We provide opportunities that maximize potential, inspire confidence, and build strength.
  - **Motto:** We invest in you.
- **Include:** We provide a safe and nurturing environment with compassion and purpose.
  - **Motto:** We serve all ages and abilities.
- **Educate:** We provide opportunities to gain knowledge and develop problem-solving skills for the future.
  - **Motto:** We believe learning leads to growth.
- **Innovate:** We embrace change as we explore new solutions to create quality and provide innovative care.
  - **Motto:** We transform visions into reality.

## Non-Medical Drivers of Health (NMDOH)

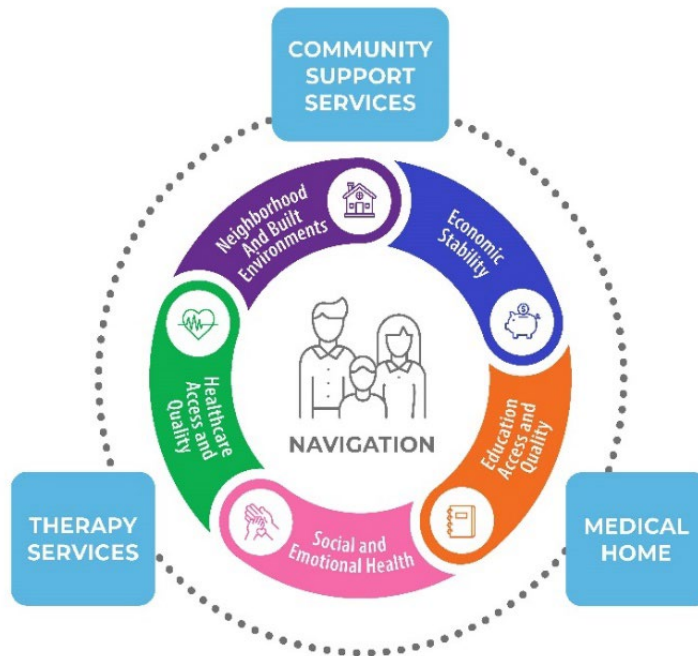
The services available at The MAC through its affiliated organizations focus on Non-Medical Drivers of Health (NMDOH), which are conditions in the places where people live, learn, work and play that affect a wide range of health and quality-of-life risks and outcomes such as transportation unavailability and barriers to empowerment that result from income status, education level, food insecurity, etc. Studies have shown that up to 70 percent of an individual's health status depends on NMDOH and behavioral factors.

The MAC's approach looks at the individual and family holistically and strives to keep them healthy and equipped with tools for achieving a better quality of life.



## The MAC Care Model™

The MAC Care Model consists of four service categories: Medical Home, Therapy Home, Community Support Services, and Navigation.



### Medical Home

The Medical Home anchors all medical services provided at The MAC, with a primary-care focus. Integrated medical care addresses physical and medical needs, along with emotional and social services support. The experts on-site have specific skillsets focused on individuals with disabilities and special needs, something not seen in most healthcare settings. Feedback from individuals with disabilities and special needs and medical providers suggest that most health centers, hospitals, and physician offices are not welcoming to these patients. Problems currently exist in the physical layout of the facilities; the providers' medical expertise in treating individuals with special needs is often lacking; and physicians are not eager to treat such patients, given the increased amount of appointment time required and the medical complexity of patients. The Medical Home at The MAC has dedicated staff members that want to treat the disability- and special-needs population and that have the skills to do so. In addition, The MAC is designed with special attention to Ultra-Accessibility™ and sensory sensitivity to reduce physical barriers in accessing treatment and accommodating all patients' special needs.

**The Ambulatory Surgical Center (ASC) at The MAC**, a component of the Medical Home services, will be an 11,460-square-foot center designed to serve the population with disabilities and special needs. Scheduled to open in the winter of 2023, The ASC will include five operating





rooms and ten recovery rooms along with an embedded imaging suite including computerized tomography (CT) scan, X-ray and ultrasound equipment. Also provided will be sedated dental procedures as well as optometric and ophthalmic exams, audiological testing, blood-drawing, and outpatient surgeries requiring anesthesia. The center will be the only ASC known to focus on assisting the population with disabilities and special needs.

## **Therapy Home**

Individuals with disabilities and special needs require various therapy disciplines and modalities for habilitation, rehabilitation, and education purposes. To produce better outcomes, these therapy disciplines and modalities need to be coordinated, comprehensive, and complementary. The MAC's therapy philosophy employs a holistic and interdisciplinary approach that concentrates on team goal-setting and provider coordination. Plus, it helps members, and their caregivers understand conditions that must be addressed to improve health and quality of life. Therapy at The MAC is in coordination with programs such as assistive technology, seating, and orthotics clinics and tele-rehab. It's in sync with the MAC Medical Home, Community Support Services, and The MAC Navigation Program. Therapy services are data-driven and outcomes-based. Measuring and reporting progress is key to assessing the effectiveness of these coordinated and comprehensive services as well as contributing to future improvements.

## **Community Support Services**

While The MAC offers the best medical and therapeutic services tailored to those with disabilities and special needs, it also features a lengthy list of social services provided by community-based organizations. Many of these services address Non-Medical Drivers of Health (NMDOH) which are the conditions into which people are born, grow, live, work and age that ultimately affect health and well-being.

## **Legal Services**

The legal services offered at The MAC identify and respond to the legal needs of individuals with disabilities and special needs, and their families, who visit The MAC for medical and non-medical services. Through a combination of educational workshops, legal clinics, and placement for extended representation, the legal home will meet the unmet legal needs of MAC Members and their families, with a particular focus on addressing Non-Medical Drivers of Health (NMDOH) that pose obstacles.

## **Practice Without Pressure™**

Practice Without Pressure™ (PWP) is a program developed to work with individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities who are unable to obtain medical, dental, or personal care services due to fear of the procedure, the use of sedation/anesthesia, or because of restraints. Providing these services without the use of restraint or sedation will result in less risk for the MAC Member and receive these services with dignity and respect.



## **Employment Center – Coming in the Fall of 2023**



Economic stability is one of the NMDOH pillars that are part of The MAC Care Model™. The key issues addressed regarding economic stability include poverty, employment, food security and housing stability. The purpose of the Employment Support Center is to assist individuals with disabilities and special needs of all ability levels achieve job readiness and pursue gainful employment and economic stability by addressing job training, job placements, job coaching and other services.

### **Comprehensive Navigation/Navigator – Key to The MAC’s Success**

Everyone with a disability or special need that comes to The MAC is assigned a Navigator, who assesses each MAC Member’s situation and patiently guides him or her to workable solutions to meet their needs. The Navigator conducts a comprehensive intake and NMDOH assessment with each MAC Member to ascertain all areas of need to include medical, therapeutic, social, financial, education, or legal. This means the MAC Member relates his or her story and circumstances once, and the information is entered into the electronic platform for referrals and tracking and updated as services are received.

Once a MAC Member completes the intake and NMDOH assessment process, a score is assigned to the individual that indicates the level of navigation resources needed. Follow-up is accomplished through an innovative and integrated electronic platform (The MAC Navigation System™), which connects all appropriate community organizations/providers and enables tracking and coordination of connections, referrals, and follow-ups.

Since multiple organizations offer services at The MAC, solutions to many needs are available on-site. The MAC’s network also extends to off-site services in the community. This pioneering approach represents the future of how health care as well as social and community services can be made available for individuals with disabilities and special needs.

The Navigator’s ultimate key to success is getting individuals with disabilities and special needs and their families to commit to The MAC Care Plan™ created just for them. Just as importantly, the Navigator serves as a trusted partner for MAC Members and their families.

### **Sustainability**

The MAC’s collaboration model has been designed so each MACer can focus on their services and be responsible for their own operations including their expenses and billing (if applicable). The MAC Care Model™ focuses on MACers not having to worry about overhead not directly related to their core mission of providing services to individuals with special needs. The MAC covers some overhead to make the MACers more efficient; these expenses are passed through to MACer partners at a relatively low cost. This encourages MACers to join the MAC Care Model™ and be present on-site.

In terms of programming, The MAC has ensured sustainability thanks to obtaining funding from various sources. For example, The MAC Navigation Program is funded by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), which is funding a model that provides a single point of contact for coordination of medical, therapy, and non-medical services for individuals of all ages with disabilities and special needs. This funding ensures that the Navigators are the single point



of contact for MAC Members. Other MAC-operated programs such as the Practice Without Pressure (PWP) program have secured funding for a minimum of five years through UnitedHealthcare.

Navigation services are provided at no charge to MAC Members and are available for all individuals with disabilities and special needs who receive MAC assistance. The MAC is working with Managed Care Organizations (MCO) to determine how to best provide value to the MAC Member and the MCO through partnerships for Navigation services.

### **In Summary**

The MAC’s innovative navigational approach strives to coordinate all medical and non-medical services for individuals with disabilities and special needs of all ages. It helps them find the assistance and tracking they need to improve their health and well-being. Medical and social services experts believe The MAC is a destination for those with cognitive and physical special needs from across the region, state, and nation. Furthermore, creators of The MAC hope that successful implementation of The MAC Care Model™ is going to encourage other communities to adopt a collaborative, coordinated healthcare effort to uplift the disability and special-needs community.

### **MACers (MAC Partners):**

#### Medical Home

**Center for Health Care Services (CHCS)** – Improves the lives of individuals with mental health disorders, substance abuse challenges, and developmental disabilities. CHCS operates a wide range of psychosocial and medical programs in Bexar County whose target populations include individuals with behavioral health disorders and intellectual disabilities. CHCS provides a Dual Diagnosis Clinic at The MAC, to assist with psychiatric medication management for individuals with a diagnosis of intellectual and/or developmental disability along with a co-occurring mental/behavioral health diagnosis.

**Children’s Hospital of San Antonio (CHOSA)** – The Children's Hospital of San Antonio's Comprehensive Autism Program offers a multidisciplinary autism evaluation for children who need a diagnosis of autism or need a diagnosis verified. CHOSA has partnered with the Autism Treatment Center and UTSA's Department of Educational Psychology to bring the gold standard treatment for autism, Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapy, to children with autism.

**CommuniCare Health Centers** – A full-service primary healthcare system with multiple locations serving Bexar, Kendall, and Hays counties. Providing integrated primary care (Pediatrics, Family Medicine, Women’s Health, Dental, Behavioral Health plus specialty services) delivered by highly trained healthcare providers, utilizing state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment and electronic health records. CommuniCare’s focus is to







always provide exceptional care and treat patients like family. Their promise to you is to always make you Get Well, Stay Well.



**Community First Health Plans** – Provides health care coverage to the citizens of Bexar and the surrounding seven counties. As the only locally-owned and managed, nonprofit health plan in the area, their commitment to their members is to provide great health care benefits backed by outstanding service, delivered by people who live in South Texas. The goal is to make San Antonio more successful in health outcomes by putting the community first.



**Our Lady of the Lake University: Speech–Language–Hearing Center** – Provides audiology services across the lifespan and provides speech-language-swallowing services for individuals ages 18 and above. Services are provided by experienced state-licensed and nationally certified audiologists and speech-language pathologists.



**Sponsel Eye Experts** – Provides comprehensive clinical and surgical eye care to all patients, from birth through adulthood. Through knowledge, science, and a nurturing environment, they strive to offer each patient and family exemplary service and the positive experience they deserve. Although Dr. Sponsel and Dr. Mancha specialize in eye care, they also focus on the total health and well-being of their patients through communication with physicians of all specialties to promote excellent care for all.



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**Happy Ohana Smiles Dental Clinic** – A state-of-the-art, Ultra-Accessible™ facility that focuses on providing dental services for individuals with special needs. Operated by Dr. Melody Zamora and David Zamora. The architectural layout was designed for wheelchair access and focuses on an approach designed to ease anxiety and provide comforting sights, sounds and smells. The specialized equipment in the five treatment rooms in the clinic accommodates both fully self-ambulatory and wheelchair patients.



**Superior HealthPlan** – Superior HealthPlan is a managed healthcare company that provides healthcare to 1.7 million Texas residents. Superior has eight office locations and serves members in all 254 counties across the state. They are committed to improving the health of the community one individual at a time through affordable and reliable healthcare plans. Their approach to healthcare in Texas can meet the needs of each person served.



## Therapy Home



**Blue Sprig Pediatrics** – Provides compassionate Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy services to those impacted with autism. From the outset, the focus is on maintaining the highest ethics and quality, while also investing in critical research to advance the field of ABA and advocating passionately for the rights of all children with autism. At The MAC, Blue Sprig provides coordinated care for individuals and their families impacted by autism to ensure they receive the highest quality of care.



**San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind** – Serves individuals who are legally blind as well as those who are experiencing onset or progressive vision loss by providing Children & Youth Programs, Family, Parent, and child/youth events and activities as well as Orientation & Mobility Programs.



**TeamAbility** – Provides physical therapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy, Cortical Visual Impairment Program (range assessment, comprehensive program, family education), parent support and education, assistive technology assessments, independent student assessments for school districts and parents.

## Community Support Services



**Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG)** – Seeks to enhance the quality of life of all residents of the Alamo Region in partnership with elected and appointed officials, funders, community partners and beneficiaries. Programs offered are Aging Services, IDD Services, Veteran Services, Weatherization Services, Regional Transit, and a resource center.



**Any Baby Can of San Antonio (ABC)** – Provides Case Management, Autism Services, Sibling Support and a Center for Infant and Child Loss, which serves children from birth to 17 years old. ABC serves all medical conditions, developmental disabilities both diagnosed and undiagnosed, and the Prescription Assistance Program serves individuals of all ages.



**Brighton Center** – Provides intervention services for children with disabilities in San Antonio through therapy, specialized skills training, early childhood education, parent workshops, and education advocacy. Programs offered are Early Childhood Education, Pediatric Therapy, Parent Workshops, and Education Advocacy.



**ConnectAbility** – Supports individuals with life-altering injuries and their families and caregivers. Providing care coordination and support groups for individuals with a primary diagnosis of traumatic or acquired brain injury, spinal cord injury, stroke or amputation, or other condition or disability with similar functional limitation, no age limit.



**Epilepsy Foundation Central & South Texas** – Works to assist individuals overcome the challenges of living with epilepsy and to accelerate therapies to stop seizures, find cures, and save lives. Services include Information and Referral, Support Groups, Case Management, Workshops, and Epilepsy Education for individuals with epilepsy and their caregivers.



**Project Angel Fares** – Providing trips of a lifetime for children with special needs or disability diagnosis since 2012. Their mission is to make it possible for the children and their families to experience all-inclusive Morgan’s Wonderland and Morgan’s Inspiration Island, all expenses paid. PAF now expands to include the needed services that The MAC provides.



**Our Lady of the Lake University – Worden School of Social Services** – The home to OLLU social work programs has set the standard for social work education and is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. At The MAC, social work interns provide support to the Navigation Department to acquire skills and knowledge for specialized intervention in direct practice.



**Reaching Maximum Independence** – Assists individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities reach their maximum level of independence. This is accomplished on both the program and individual level through a spectrum of services to include: 10 group homes, three apartment living sites, host home companion support, a dynamic day program called Life Enrichment Program. The services networked through The MAC are the Supported Employment Program.



**San Antonio Food Bank** – Fighting hunger is the number one priority of the Food Bank, but it also seeks to educate and aid in many other ways. A variety of programs and resources is available to families, individuals, seniors, children, and military members in need.



**San Antonio Legal Services Association (SALSA)** – SALSA is a corps of attorney volunteers coordinated by professional staff to provide free legal services to those with limited means and those who are vulnerable to risk. SALSA recruits, trains, and supports the volunteer attorneys who represent SALSA’s clients – low-income individuals and families – without charge.



**The Arc of San Antonio** – Provides Family Support Services, Community Services Case Management, Community Living Assistance and Support Services case management, and has an Adult Life Enrichment program serving members with IDD.



**St. Mary's University Law School: Center for Legal and Social Justice** – Clinical and pro bono programs; assisting disadvantaged individuals with legal issues. Students may perform important legal work and gain a better understanding of the legal processes while helping those in need through opportunities.



**VIA Metropolitan Transit** – Keeps San Antonio and Bexar County moving with bus, van, and on-demand transit options. VIA Trans is a shared-ride, curb-to-curb service option that offers independence through mobility and expands access to opportunity for customers who cannot utilize regular bus service because of a disability. VIA also offers VIA Link, an app-based, on-demand transit option available in designated service zones.



**University of Texas at San Antonio** – UTSA at The MAC is The Evaluation and Research Coordinating Center that monitors and evaluates the efficacy of MAC programs, services, and research and an active partner in providing information and guidance to The MAC to inform growth.



**Opportunity Home San Antonio** – Committed more than 80 years to building and maintaining affordable housing for residents of San Antonio. SAHA provides housing assistance to more than 57,000 children, adults and seniors through its Public Housing, Housing Choice Voucher and Mixed-Income housing programs.



**Life Skills for Living** – Faith-based ministry that provides significant areas to include Stress Reduction, Conflict Resolution, Relationship Enhancement, Basic Financial Life Skills, and Anger Solutions. Hands-on, low-cost/no-cost, life skills programs are taught by certified facilitators at The MAC in small group classes or in confidential one-on-one sessions.

**For More Information:** [www.MorgansWonderlandMAC.com](http://www.MorgansWonderlandMAC.com)