



Swiss Biologic Dentistry after a remodel, this photo; its previous life as an auto shop, inset

# Strong Bones

How Valley medical practices are giving new life to familiar buildings.

**A** **CROSS METRO** Phoenix, medical practices are increasingly setting up shop in places locals already know – former big-box stores, auto garages, theaters and car dealerships – rather than new, purpose-built clinics. The approach isn't just about speed or savings, although there is that: Phoenix's adaptive-reuse program offers modest fee relief, zoning flexibility and fewer regulatory hurdles that can shorten timelines. But designers and physicians also say reuse makes health care feel more approachable by replacing institutional cues with familiarity, light and openness.

From North Phoenix to Goodyear to Scottsdale, these projects show how old buildings are being reimagined to support modern care.

## OPTUM PRIMARY CARE METRO CENTER

Housed in a former Circuit City near Castles N' Coasters, Optum's Metro Center clinic taps into neighborhood memory as much as infrastructure. CEO Stephen Macias, who used to cruise Metro Parkway as a teen and remem-

bers it as a place "where everybody showed up to meet," says choosing a recognizable building along what's now a central transit corridor helps reduce barriers for patients. "It became an opportunity to be a connector again," he says. "And, in our case, a care connector."

## SWISS BIOLOGIC DENTISTRY

Owner-designer Matt Ellingson transformed a former auto repair shop on Seventh Street into what he calls an "anti-dental office" for his dentist wife, Amelia. Gardens, natural light and warm interiors replace harsh lighting and closed doors, with nearly every operatory facing the backyard greenery – including wandering tortoises. "I wanted the first experience to feel almost like a café," Ellingson says.

## GOODYEAR MEDICAL PLAZA

A 1980s multiplex movie theater now serves as a 50,000-square-foot outpatient hub adjoining Abrazo West Campus. The building's original multi-screen layout made it well-suited to adaptive reuse, accommodating imaging, wound care and specialty services within a single, subdivided footprint.

## NOAH CHOLLA HEALTH CENTER

Designed by Ware Malcomb Phoenix, this South Scottsdale clinic occupies a former car dealership, embracing the openness of the old showroom. A light-filled lobby and flexible layout help the space read more like a neighborhood gathering place than a traditional clinic. "It immediately felt more like a community space," designer Lynne Orłowski says.

## BRAINLOVE & VITAL INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

BrainLove, founded by Alzheimer's disease specialist Dr. Dani Cabral, shares a Central Phoenix building owned and redesigned by Dr. Kerilyn Bollman, whose Vital Integrative Medicine practice also operates there. The house-like setting previously used by a drywall subcontractor was chosen for its warmth and calm – an intentional contrast to institutional clinics, creating a conducive environment for memory evaluations, caregiver education, care planning and quality-of-life strategies alongside diagnosis. "I wanted it to feel comfortable, not intimidating," Cabral says.

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