

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Office of the Governor
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120
March 26, 2020

Re: AIA Pennsylvania Offer of Expertise for COVID-19 Emergency Response and Disaster Management

Dear Governor Wolf,

Architects across the country are partnering with state governments to serve and advise in this critical time and Pennsylvania's architects stand ready to do the same. Architects are bound by their licenses to protect public health, safety, and welfare and, to that end, employ design and systems-thinking to address hazard risk, mitigate disasters, and meet client performance goals. The leadership of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) of Pennsylvania is actively organizing its membership and Disaster Assistance Committee in preparation to assist in the Emergency Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The skillset of architects is valuable in all phases of emergency management. Roughly three thousand AIA members in Pennsylvania are experienced and ready to respond alongside state and local authorities to assist the COVID-19 response.

The space enclosure for COVID-19 patients is a critical component of saving lives. Architects can provide informed solutions for care environments being considered by policymakers and emergency response professionals. Architects' expertise teaches us the impact that the built space has on health outcomes and how care is delivered.

AIA Pennsylvania members are prepared to rapidly provide information and expertise to support disaster management and response efforts. We have identified some general areas where we can immediately contribute assistance if called upon by your administration, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, or the Department of Health:

- Strategically plan for surge by evaluating current space utilization in hospitals to maximize existing areas for use.
- Collaborate as members of Design-build teams for hospital surge facilities.
- Advise on specific air filtration and exhausting requirements to protect the patient within its enclosure, the caregivers, and others in adjacent spaces.
- Inform on benefits, challenges and trade-offs of shelter types (i.e. hotel, convention center, schools) to house the influx of COVID-19 patients.
- Assist with homeless population sheltering, treatment, and protection.
- Identify Industry Partners who can assist in emergency response.
- Active scenario envisioning and planning

Time is of the essence and improper care environments can create many unintended consequences. Architects can help to **save time, money and, most importantly, lives** by assisting in the multiple stages of this work.

To activate this resource requires only a request for us to join the team. We can then immediately work with your team to provide assistance that would contribute to your needs by scoping the mission(s) and offering our best assets to respond. We can quickly align our statewide organization, our expert members individually for each region of the state, resources for these response efforts, and best practices from ongoing response

The American Institute of Architects

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efforts by our AIA colleagues in other parts of the country (including New York, King County, WA, and New Jersey). We have been working to remain abreast of these other efforts so we can best assist Pennsylvania if and when called upon.

Many of our member firms and their staffs are leaders in the healthcare design industry and offer their expertise to serve the Commonwealth. We stand ready to help in these, or any other, areas that may be needed to further swift and effective disaster management. Please let us know if you would like any follow-up information.

Sincerely,



Al Comly, AIA
State Disaster Assistance Coordinator, AIA Pennsylvania
Liaison to National Disaster Assistance Committee, American Institute of Architects

CC:

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency
Pennsylvania Department of Health
The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania Healthcare Association