COVID-19 has impacted our lives from our workspaces to homes and everywhere in between. As we spend more time inside, interior design services in public and residential areas are essential to keep you, your colleagues, your customers, and your families safe.

The value of face-to-face interaction cannot be underestimated, especially within public spaces like corporate offices, restaurants, retail stores, government buildings, and more. As our world transitions to a blended environment of both face-to-face and virtual interactions, many entities can help stop the spread of COVID-19 and achieve their goals by innovating their current spaces to maximize the health, safety, and overall wellness of the buildings’ occupants, while continuing to function, grow, and contribute to society.

Our home environments are also critical to our individual health and wellbeing. Although many people are working from home, intensive remodeling and reconstruction is not necessary to protect the health and safety of yourself or your family.

Every day, homeowners and business owners are engaging qualified interior designers to change their spaces to conform with state government, World Health Organization, CDC, and other COVID health guidelines.

In commercial and residential spaces, interior designers advance public health, safety, and welfare during pandemics by:

- Promoting social distancing by modifying larger areas, utilizing glass and plastic shields between spaces, developing outdoor spaces when possible, and reevaluating office and public space layouts;
- Identifying circulation paths by implementing “enter-only” and “exit-only” doorways and coordinating the flow of the employees’ and/or customers’ movement through the building and interactions with one another;
- Designating clear signage for safety protocols including check-in stations and hand sanitizer locations;
- Providing easy-to-understand graphics regarding recommended guidelines and visual indications for queues when applicable;
- Minimizing touchpoints and optimizing sanitation protocols through implementation of contact-free equipment and hardware, and convenient storage of hygiene amenities;
- Ensuring proper ventilation by changing furnace and humidifier filters regularly and utilizing windows as weather/temperature permits;
- Recommending household improvements like touchless faucets or soap dispensers and maximizing usage; and,
- Specifying materials and finishes that can be easily cleaned and disinfected with safe, effective and EPA-approved products.
THE QUALIFIED INTERIOR DESIGNER’S ROLE IN THE CORONAVIRUS VACCINE ROLLOUT

NCIDQ-certified designers are playing an ever-increasing role in the rollout of a potential coronavirus vaccine. Despite popular thinking that it will be like a common flu shot, each pharmaceutical company’s vaccine will have specific storage requirements and vaccination facilities will have strict protocols for patient queuing, movement, and monitoring. Qualified interior designers will be essential in addressing the following:

- The vaccine has to be kept at -112 degrees Fahrenheit and has a much shorter shelf life than a flu vaccine.
  - This requires special freezers that not all medical facilities currently have. It requires special space planning and rearrangement of current facilities already stressed by the pandemic.
  - The short shelf life requires a facility to use the supply quickly once received.

- Once a vaccine is administered, a patient is monitored for 15 minutes, but still must be socially distanced from other patients.
  - This, once again, requires space planning and unique materials to ensure safety of the patient.
  - All seating, panels, tables, and items in the waiting areas must be hard, cleanable surfaces that can withstand cleaning every 15 minutes for at least 12 hours a day for months at a minimum.
  - Wayfinding becomes increasingly important to ensure the non-vaccinated do not cross paths with the recently vaccinated.

- Very few hospitals or clinics are currently set up for mass vaccinations.
  - Reconfiguring these spaces will require the work of the 100 interior designers in the U.S. Veterans Health Administration, designers employed by companies like CVS and Walgreens, and designers across hospital systems like Nationwide Children’s.