It’s no secret that we are dealing with a national health crisis. By 2030, it is projected that half of all adults—that’s 115 million adults—will be obese.¹ And even before that, projections estimate that by 2018, obesity will cost the United States 21 percent of our total healthcare costs, or $344 billion annually.² But, obesity is not our only concern. Currently, 87.5% of healthcare costs are due to an individual’s lifestyle,³ things we impose on ourselves: smoking, inadequate exposure to quality light and air, insufficient sleep, improper nutrition, stress, and overall comfort and happiness.

So how can design professionals help?

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Americans spend 90 percent of their time indoors. This gives us, as design professionals, an enormous opportunity to influence the spaces people frequent—whether work or home, at places of entertainment or necessity. In the case of designing Tomorrow’s Workplace, health and wellbeing should be central to the design.

The WELL Building Standard is the first standard of its kind with its main focus on the health and wellbeing of building occupants. Developed by the International WELL Building Institute (a Delos Living, LLC creation), this new building standard is backed by evidence-based health and wellness research by medical professionals, scientists, and researchers and pushes built environment influencers (building owners, designers, engineers, architects, building developers, et cetera) to not only consider the impacts to our planet, but also the direct impact on people.

With people spending 90% of their time indoors, in a sense, the WELL Building Standard initiates a form of preventative care. It provides a standard for building performance and operation to ensure that the time spent indoors is helping, not hurting.

According to the research that supports the WELL Building Standard, the built environment has the following impacts on the body’s critical systems (the following is not a comprehensive list):

- **Skeletal and Muscular Systems.** Applications of universal design, proper ergonomics and active furnishings improve posture, alignment and maintain strength, limiting physical stress on the skeletal and muscular systems.
• **Respiratory System.** Access to opportunities for safe fitness, removal of particulate matter from ambient air, and mitigation of molds and microbes improve breathing and the overall strength of the respiratory system.

• **Nervous System.** Promotion of proper light exposure and alignment of circadian rhythm, incorporation of biophilia, beauty, and proper visual stimulation, and adequate sound promotion and barriers work in tandem to support neurologic health—the main control center of the body.

The WELL Building Standard is made up of seven concepts that directly correspond to the needs of the body’s systems: Air, Water, Nourishment, Light, Fitness, Comfort, Mind.

Within each of the seven concepts, there are features that contain applicable points identified as either a **Precondition** point or **Optimization** point. Each feature can be categorized by design elements, protocols or performance standards, therefore encouraging the standard to be applied holistically—considering such things as the location of a stair, healthy sleep policies, workplace family support, and performance fundamental water quality.

For *Tomorrow’s Workplace*, the following features were highlighted:

**Multi-story Walking Path and Rooftop Terrace**

A multi-story walking path was incorporated between the mixed-use levels of the building. An encouragement to move your body throughout the workday places important emphasis on connecting with nature, focusing eyes in the distance, and fitness. By directly connecting the office spaces, residential spaces, and a rooftop terrace by way of a meandering walking path, this design feature becomes central to all building occupants habitual routines—therefore impacting their lifestyle. The path itself meets two important features of the WELL Building Standard: 64 – Interior Fitness Circulation and 72 – ADA Accessible Design Standards. The access to the outdoor rooftop terrace also incorporates these important WELL features: 10 – Appropriate Pesticide Use, 49 – Appropriate Food Production, 51 – Food Production: Gardening Space and Plant Support, 66 – Structured Fitness Opportunities, 87 – Beauty + Design I, 95 – Stress Treatment, and finally 100 – Biophilia.

**Office Space and Shared Amenities**

An open office space was designed with access to a variety of shared amenities. These spaces promote health and wellbeing features that optimize the time spent in the office. If 90% of time is spent indoors, the goal is to bring healthy opportunities to people while encouraging incorporation of the opportunities into daily routines therefore promoting productivity, retention and happiness. These spaces incorporate the following features from

For more information about the WELL Building Standard and the International WELL Building Institute, visit http://www.wellcertified.com.

2 National Association for Sport and Physical Education. 2010 Shape of the Nation Report.
3 Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne (IPFW Study).

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