The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all aspects of our lives: how we work, how we socialize, how we provide healthcare, how we take care of our most vulnerable members of society, and how we die. The Cornell Institute for Healthy Futures is creating a series of publication(s) and webinars which considers the post-COVID-era, focusing on how we as a society will be able to design healthy futures.

As a part of this effort, we want to harness the energy and talent of students eager to make a change in healthcare and healing environments in the context of human connection and safety in the post pandemic world.

To that end, we are announcing a student competition as part of our “Life after COVID-19” series!

While embroiled in the challenges of the current pandemic, we must simultaneously plan for the future. Experts agree that virulent infectious diseases are likely to become more commonplace. Procedures and protocols must be in place when preparing for future pandemics for safety, health and human connection. Design of the physical environment and for the human experience, particularly in healthcare and wellness settings will play a critical role in building resiliency.

Teams of 2-3 undergraduate or graduate students, preferably representing more than one department or college within Cornell, will come together to create an innovative human experience design in a common space of a healthcare or wellness organization.

Challenge:

After the pandemic, healthcare and wellness facilities must provide common spaces that balance the feeling of safety and consider all pandemic safety protocols (i.e., social or physical distancing, avoid crowds, sanitation, etc.), while also feeling inviting and warm. Imagine your team has been hired by a university healthcare or wellness facility to redesign one of their common spaces that will support the wellbeing of its staff and patients. The facility is situated at a university much like Cornell with a diverse population of 20,000-25,000 students.

Your team is charged to invoke a sense of safety, inclusivity and warmth by designing a human experience innovation. This human experience design can include products such as surface materials that invoke health and warmth, furniture specifications or technological enhancements; services that
enhance the human connection and create a welcoming atmosphere; and environmental interventions such as lighting, sculptures and plantings. The common space your team decides to innovate could be a lobby, lounge, playroom, dining area or an outdoor space such as a courtyard, roof garden, terrace, or plaza and is located in the facility for a specific patient population.

Choose a specific service focus and a specific sector/patient population within the university. Identify a specific common area for the human experience intervention that would best serve this patient population.

Judging Criteria:

- "Whole Human": Does the design consider elements of a healing environment for “the whole human,” including physical, psychological, and social needs of the specific student patient sector?
- Sense of Safety: Does the solution include necessary protocols for patients and staff to feel safe?
- Sense of Warmth and Inclusivity: Does the solution address how to balance the sense of safety post pandemic with the sense of warmth and human connection?
- Metrics: Does the proposal address what metrics should measure its success or failure (for the patients and staff)?

Timeline

March 29, 6 pm: Proposal due date. Proposal to include:

1) One page bullet-point overview/outline
   ✓ Names of all team members
   ✓ Problem statement
     a) Service focus of community space (e.g. primary care, physical therapy, rehabilitation, nutrition services, counseling, occupational medicine, etc.)
     b) Patient population focus (e.g. students with children, athletes, students with disabilities, faculty, staff, etc.)
     c) Specific common/community space- such as lobby, lounge, dining area, outdoor plaza, roof garden, etc.
   ✓ Description of the solution/innovation
   ✓ Benefit to community and healthcare or wellness organization
   ✓ Metrics to measure success

2) 10-slide (or fewer) design pitch

Please send proposal to: healthy-futures@cornell.edu

April 2: Finalists selected and notified

April 8, 1-3 pm: Finalists to present their ideas to CIHF Advisory Board members during the virtual CIHF spring advisory board meeting via Zoom.

April 9: Winners announced and awarded prizes: $1000 first prize, $750 second prize, $500 third prize.

Any questions can be directed to Nikki Cerra at hnc24@cornell.edu.