

May 12th, 2020**Attention all Healthcare Engineering Professionals**

Re: Update on progress of IFHE teams supporting WHO global response to COVID-19.

Dear Colleagues,

The response to our appeal in April for volunteer teams to support the work of the World Health Organisation has been excellent. So far thirteen (13) teams have responded, with 11 of these coming from USA, Canada and Latin America and 2 from European countries. WHO ran a training program for the IFHE teams with coordination being delivered by Walt Vernon (USA) in association with our IFHE-WHO liaison officer, Paul Merlevede (Belgium) and the IFHE Secretariat, IHEEM (UK).

So far 18 requests for assistance have been made to WHO, and one project has been delivered by the IFHE teams. An existing maternity wing in a facility in Burkina Faso has been converted into a COVID-19 ward. The conversion includes spaces for critical, high-risk, and low-risk patients, together with necessary support space for safely donning and doffing PPE. The project includes plans for ventilation in accordance with WHO standards, with provisions for mortuary, laundry, and waste disposal. The project was completed in one week by a team of IFHE volunteers provided by the Association of Medical Facility Professionals (USA). The WHO has requested help with two hospitals in Brazil, and teams from Mexico will be working on these projects.

This collaborative effort is evidence of the good work being produced in response to the WHO request for assistance from IFHE. The objective is to establish teams of healthcare design experts in each region of the world to support national health initiatives.

A number of individuals have responded to the request, for which IFHE is extremely grateful, however more teams are required, particularly in Europe and Australasia. We appeal to our membership in these regions to consider establishing teams. It is preferable that teams are established locally and advice of the teams is made via email to internationalcovid19@iheem.org.uk

It is very likely that COVID-19 will remain an ongoing health threat. Despite some countries making excellent progress in minimizing the impact, many others are just beginning to feel the full burden of the disease in their communities. It is expected the work of the teams could be needed for some time to come. IFHE will continue to coordinate the teams, and provide support and training on the WHO requirements.

If you are able to establish a team, and provide us with details, please forward the following information as soon as possible:

Architect

Firm:

Project Manager:

Email and Telephone:

Brief description of healthcare expertise:



Engineer

Firm:

Project Manager:

Email and Telephone:

Brief description of healthcare expertise:

As stated in our original letter, the nature of the acute respiratory illness associated with coronavirus, creates a demand for engineering and design specialties that include medical devices, medical gases and intensive care facilities.

We appreciate that we have not reached every potential volunteer through our limited network, so I encourage you to share this update and ongoing request wherever possible within and throughout your own professional networks, remembering this is not limited to IFHE membership or member countries.

I also draw your attention to the work of the Global COVID-19 Hub being coordinated by IHEEM in conjunction with IFHE. Visit the website at www.iheem.org.uk and sign up to receive the bi-weekly newsletter with articles of interest and support from around the world.

If through this work you are interested in becoming a member of IFHE please make contact with our secretariat via email at ifhe@iheem.org.uk

Yours truly,



Darryl Pitcher
International President, IFHE

