

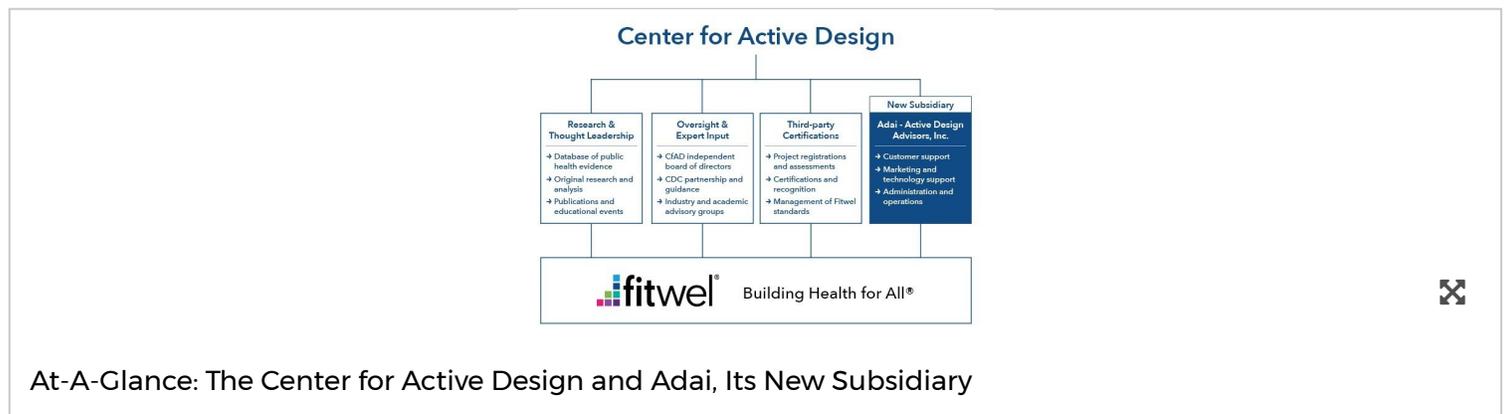
# A New Business Unit To Drive Implementation Of Fitwel At Scale

Center for Active Design announces creation of Active Design Advisors, Inc., to meet increased demand for its healthy building certification system



NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Center for Active Design** →  
May 13, 2021, 10:00 ET

NEW YORK, May 13, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- The Center for Active Design (CfAD) today announced the creation of **Active Design Advisors, Inc.**, a new business unit designed to help grow and drive implementation of Fitwel®, its increasingly popular healthy building certification system. As demand for wellness real estate spiked during the COVID-19 pandemic, so too did Fitwel registrations, which grew 190 percent in 2020, with Q4 registrations increasing by 644 percent over the same quarter in 2019.



The new business unit—its shortened acronym **Adai** is pronounced "a-DAY"—will be responsible for promoting and administering the Fitwel certification as it expands across key markets, as well as maintaining Fitwel's best-in-class customer service.



Building on a 10-year legacy of global thought leadership following its 2012 launch under New York City's Bloomberg Administration, CfAD will continue translating the global public health evidence base into practical and implementable design and development solutions and will retain responsibility for objective third-party Fitwel certification. The organization also will continue leveraging its partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to maintain the Fitwel standard, reviewing and updating it regularly with input from academic and industry advisory groups to ensure the standard remains both rigorous and practical to apply across portfolios of real estate assets. And CfAD will continue using its research acumen to develop reports and white papers to educate and empower the marketplace.

Coming on the heels of last year's record growth, CfAD President and CEO Joanna Frank said the formation of Adai will help the organization meet current and future demand and drive greater impact. "This is exactly the right moment for us to be launching Adai," she said. "Today Fitwel-certified projects improve the lives of more than a million people across the globe. But how do we get to 10 million, to 100 million? We want to invest in people and technology to meet the demands of the real estate industry for ESG-driven solutions. Not only will Adai help us grow our capacity to keep accelerating the healthy building movement, it will help us maintain the highest standards of customer service and expand our platform to ensure we truly are responding to our clients' needs."

Unlike other healthy building certifications, the Fitwel standard emerged from a vast evidence base dating back to the world's first global pandemic in 1918. In 2017, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and U.S. General Services Administration selected CfAD to serve as the exclusive licensed operator of Fitwel, which leverages a proprietary approach to translating its growing database of peer-reviewed research studies to create actionable strategies that promote measurable health outcomes for occupants and communities. Fitwel is leading the way in helping owners and operators of real estate to advance the 'social' component of ESG strategy by standardizing benchmarks that most strongly impact human health.

As of March 31, 2021, more than 2,100 Fitwel projects had been registered in 50 countries—with Q1 registrations up 238% year-over-year—representing more than 675 million square feet of real estate directly impacting 1.3 million people. Tenants are driving demand, with commercial interior projects representing 30 percent of total registrations last year.

The rise in Fitwel usage aligns with the findings of a recent global investor survey that CfAD conducted with **BentallGreenOak** and the **United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative**, which reported that 92 percent of investors representing portfolio investments in real estate totaling approximately US\$1.03 trillion plan to enhance their health and wellness strategies over the next three years.

Reena Agarwal, CfAD's Chief Operating Officer, said the early years of Fitwel's growth revolved around educating the marketplace—defining a healthy building and why it matters. Now the focus is on scaling the strategies as quickly as reasonable. "We have so much verified data now that we didn't have in the beginning," she said. "We can prove the positive outcomes, so the next chapter will find us working closely with our client partners to scale Fitwel across entire portfolios of real estate assets. Our goal is not to give out plaques. Our goal is market transformation. And the creation of Adai, the expansion of our team, of our products and services, is absolutely critical to this mission."

As a subsidiary of CfAD, Adai will benefit from the same core personnel, executive leadership and board of directors, a governance strategy intended to ensure the two organizations remain aligned in mission and deliver seamless service. In the near-term, Adai will seek to become a benefit corporation and pursue formal B-Corp certification, joining a global business movement committed to building a regenerative and inclusive economy. From a leadership perspective, Adai will be run by co-founders Joanna Frank, who will serve as CEO of Adai, and Reena Agarwal, who will serve as COO of Adai. Both Joanna and Reena will join Adai's Board of Directors.

## **About Fitwel**

Fitwel is the world's leading certification system committed to building health for all<sup>®</sup>. Generated by expert analysis of 5,600+ academic research studies, Fitwel is implementing a vision for a healthier future where all buildings and communities are enhanced to strengthen health and well-being. Fitwel was originally created by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention and U.S. General Services Administration. The CDC remains the research and evaluation partner for Fitwel. The Center for Active Design (CfAD), a global not-for-profit organization, maintains the Fitwel standard and conducts objective third-party assessments that lead to certified projects. CfAD's new business unit, Adai (pronounced "a-DAY"), is charged with expanding Fitwel to the global market, administering the program while providing best-in-class customer service and technical support. To learn more about Fitwel, please visit: [www.fitwel.org](http://www.fitwel.org).

## Related Links

[centerforactivedesign.org](http://centerforactivedesign.org)