

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 2, 2017

Contact: Symphony Chau, [symphony.chau@centerforactivedesign.org](mailto:symphony.chau@centerforactivedesign.org), Center for Active Design



**FITWEL® EXPANDS TO SUPPORT HEALTHIER RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS**

*The Center for Active Design expands Fitwel, offering the only certification system that qualifies access to Fannie Mae’s Healthy Housing Rewards initiative, and welcomes AvalonBay, the first residential-only developer to become a Fitwel Champion.*

New York, NY – November 13, 2017 – The Center for Active Design (CfAD) today announced the expansion of Fitwel to multifamily residential, making it the only qualifying mechanism for Fannie Mae’s Healthy Housing Rewards financial incentive program. Named one of Fast Company’s 2017 Top 10 Most Innovative Companies in Social Good, Fitwel is the premier system for optimizing building design and operations to improve health and wellbeing outcomes. After just launching to the private sector in March 2017, Fitwel already has a global imprint, impacting more than 250,000 building occupants with over 380 projects certified or in progress.

The Fitwel Certification System was initially created for office buildings and corporate campuses in response to the growing demand for healthier buildings and workspaces, serving as a market differentiator to retain and attract tenants. Fitwel was created as a joint initiative led by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) together with the General Services Administration. Recognizing the demand for a health-promoting certification system for residential settings, CfAD, in collaboration with the CDC and experts from the design and development community, expanded Fitwel to directly target multifamily residential buildings and developments.

For affordable housing properties, Fitwel offers an opportunity to access a new financial incentive from Fannie Mae. As of today, Fitwel is the only certification system that qualifies access to Fannie Mae’s Healthy Housing Rewards initiative, which offers below market rate loan pricing for borrowers who incorporate health-promoting design features into their newly constructed or rehabilitated multifamily affordable rental properties.

“With the Healthy Housing Rewards program, Fannie Mae is using its Multifamily Affordable Housing business as a broad platform to encourage borrowers to implement healthy design features, including community gardens or playgrounds, that improve the health and stability of low- and very-low income renters that call these buildings home,” said Bob Simpson, Vice President, Customer Engagement, Fannie Mae. “Our partnership with the Center for Active Design allows us to use the Fitwel Certification System as a way to have a positive, measureable impact on the multifamily market and to support a more healthy, stable and sustainable environment for renters, their families and the communities in which they live.”

Establishing itself as a vanguard in the healthy building movement, AvalonBay Communities, Inc., a leading equity REIT with a long-term track record of developing, redeveloping, acquiring, and managing distinctive residences, is the first residential-only developer to become a Fitwel Champion and commit to implement Fitwel’s multifamily residential scorecard in their portfolio.

“We are excited to become the first multi-family residential developer and operator to become a Fitwel Champion,” said Mark Delisi, Senior Director of Corporate Responsibility at AvalonBay Communities. “Our purpose is to create a better way to live

for our residents, and we know that innovation in residential wellbeing and partnering with Fitwel will certainly improve the health and wellbeing of our residents.”

As part of the Fitwel Certification System, Fitwel for multifamily residential consists of a set of evidence-based strategies, representing the best science that exists linking health with design. Each Fitwel strategy is linked by empirical evidence to at least one of seven health impact categories and encourages incorporation of opportunities for physical activity, healthy food and drink options, proximity to outdoor spaces, limited exposure to pollutants, emergency preparedness, and more.

“Incorporating health-promoting elements into home environments has a measurable positive impact on the health and stability of residents. With today’s launch of Fitwel for multifamily residential in conjunction with our continued partnership with Fannie Mae, we are ensuring equitable access to spaces that promote health,” said Lisa Creighton, Vice President of Strategy and Development at the Center for Active Design. “Similar to the exceptional launch and success of Fitwel for workplaces, we’ve already fielded significant interest from residential developers. We are thrilled that AvalonBay has committed to ensure that residents within its portfolio of properties benefit from healthy building and community design.”

Fitwel for multifamily residential is optimized for use in new and existing buildings and for market rate, affordable, and senior residential properties. Fitwel's technology-based system creates an efficient and user-friendly experience, helping to further ensure accessibility and ease of use by everyone from real estate developers to facility managers. Fitwel is committed to ensuring the most comprehensive outcomes for individuals, buildings, and communities and has intentionally been priced to be cost-effective, making it accessible to as many properties as possible.

To learn more about Fitwel Certification System, visit: <https://fitwel.org/> and follow CfAD and Fitwel: @active\_design + @fitwel. For information on using Fitwel and to sign up, please contact: [info@fitwel.org](mailto:info@fitwel.org).

### **About Fitwel and the Center for Active Design:**

Named one of Fast Company’s 2017 Top 10 Most Innovative Companies in Social Good, Fitwel is the premier system for optimizing building design and operations to improve health and productivity outcomes. Generated by expert analysis of more than 3,000 academic research studies, Fitwel is implementing a vision for a healthier future where all buildings and communities are enhanced to strengthen health and wellbeing. Fitwel was created as a joint initiative led by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention together with the General Services Administration. The Center for Active Design (CfAD), an international non-profit that uses design to foster healthy and engaged communities, is the independent operator and third-party certifier of Fitwel. CfAD was awarded the exclusive operating license in 2016 with the mandate to expand Fitwel globally to the private sector.

*FITWEL & Design is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS). Participation by The Center for Active Design and/or any other organization does not imply endorsement by HHS.*