

HOK Designs COVID-19 Testing Centers for New York City Department of Health

Written by: HOK Architects

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The testing sites in Brooklyn and Queens allow medical workers to collect hundreds of specimens per day and return results within hours.

HOK recently completed the design of four New York City COVID-19 testing centers to be operated by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The testing centers, two in Brooklyn (Crown Heights and Fort Greene) and two in Queens (Corona and Jamaica), bring comprehensive renovations to clinics that previously had been used to test and treat patients for sexually transmitted diseases and tuberculosis. The new coronavirus testing sites will allow medical workers to collect hundreds of specimens per day and return results within hours.

From design kick-off to final construction, the new testing sites took less than 12 weeks to complete and will soon begin operating. HOK provided expertise from its Healthcare and Science + Technology practices to offer a thoughtful, comprehensive solution for the biosafety level 2 (BSL-2) facilities. Working closely with contractors, the design team ensured all available materials (such as lighting, casework and furniture) were available to meet the quick deadline.

The design prioritizes infection control and modularity/flexibility. To limit contamination, the team kept the spaces simple, avoiding extraneous equipment or furniture. One-way circulation throughout the testing centers limits the opportunity for visitors and staff to cross-contaminate. Corian countertops and casework ensure surfaces can be cleaned better than traditional plastic laminate.

Once the pandemic is under control, the testing sites can easily adapt for other uses, such as exam rooms or clinical support space.

Along with the project architect, HOK, Vanderweil provided MEP engineering design services for the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's four New York City COVID-19 testing centers.