“Buildings that Fight Disease and Promote Health”

**Summary:** The 2003 Sars epidemic exploded when an infected healthcare worker, suffering from minor respiratory symptoms, went to Hong Kong for a friend’s wedding and checked into a ninth-floor room in the Metropole Hotel. He fell severely ill the next day, went to a hospital and died shortly thereafter — but not before transmitting Sars to 16 other guests with rooms on the same floor. These inadvertent hosts carried Sars to Canada, Vietnam, Singapore and across China.

Investigators from the World Health Organization summed it up best: “A global outbreak was thus seeded from a single person on a single day on a single floor of a Hong Kong hotel.”

The 1918 Spanish flu pandemic, measles outbreaks in schools and the current SARS-CoV-2 pandemic all show that living conditions can play a critical role in the spread of disease. But if buildings can make things worse, they can also make things better.

**Bio of Joseph G. Allen**

Dr. Joseph G. Allen is an assistant professor at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and co-author of Healthy Buildings: How Indoor Spaces Drive Performance and Productivity, with John Macomber at Harvard Business School. He began his career conducting forensic health investigations of sick buildings. At Harvard, Dr. Allen directs the Healthy Buildings program where he created ‘The 9 Foundations of a Healthy Building’. He works with Fortune 500 companies on implementing Healthy Building strategies in their global portfolios and presents internationally on the topic of Healthy Buildings. His work has been featured widely in the popular press, including the Wall Street Journal, National Geographic, Financial Times, USA Today, NPR, The Washington Post, Fortune, New York Times, and Harvard Business Review. Dr. Allen is an Associate Editor of the Journal of Exposure Science and Environmental Epidemiology and the journal Indoor Air. He earned his Doctor of Science (DSc) and Master of Public Health (MPH) degrees from the Boston University School of Public Health, and a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Biology from Boston College. More information on his research can be found at: www.ForHealth.org.