



## Global Indoor Health Network (GIHN)

*"Working Together for Healthy Indoor Environments"*

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# Call to Action

It is time we started to pay more attention to the indoor air we breathe.

It is time for our national and world leaders to develop a comprehensive public health response to this devastating epidemic that has the potential to cripple our individual and collective futures.

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## Overview

The Global Indoor Health Network is a dedicated group of scientists, physicians, researchers, building engineers, indoor air quality experts, industrial hygienists, attorneys, teachers, injured workers, advocates and others who are working together to promote healthy indoor environments in homes, schools and businesses. GIHN membership is continuing to grow, with members throughout the United States and in 11 other countries.

Astute physicians and healers have been aware of the existence of environmental toxins for over a thousand years. The list of substances, both naturally occurring and manmade, which may cause harm to the human organism, is continually growing.

There is extensive research available on a vast number of indoor air contaminants, including chemicals, molds, mycotoxins, lead, radon, asbestos, bacteria, electromagnetic fields, formaldehyde, air fresheners, fragrances, products of combustion, VOCs, carbon monoxide, pesticides and many other toxins.

With specific regard to the health effects of mold and mycotoxins in water-damaged buildings, thousands of research papers have been published over the past 30+ years and many more are currently in progress.

It is time for the naysayers to stop spreading their false claims and denials. It is time for our world leaders, elected officials, courts, medical organizations, allopathic physicians and other non-believers to move beyond the focus of “establishing the fact of mold disease,” because it has already been established in numerous research papers and in the treatment of thousands of patients.

It is time for our national and world leaders to develop a comprehensive public health response to this devastating epidemic that has the potential to cripple our individual and collective futures.

On our website and in other papers published by GIHN, we have highlighted the extensive research which clearly demonstrates many of these principles and look forward to collaborative efforts in this search for better health and safer living and working conditions.

Since our inception in 2010, the Global Indoor Health Network has been actively addressing this issue on several fronts. It is important to acknowledge that there are many researchers, physicians, activists and others who have been working on this cause for 10 years, 20 years and longer.

GIHN is focused on the following specific action items and is working with others to increase awareness of this serious public health issue.

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## **Marketing**

1. Create educational programs for mass distribution to rapidly increase awareness of this illness (e.g., books, videos, pamphlets, announcements on TV/Internet/radio/social networking sites, blogs, webinars, etc.).
2. Collaborate with key stakeholders to reach consensus on a common name for this illness.
3. Participate in the development of a marketing strategy to ensure accurate and consistent messaging.
4. Respond to news articles and research papers issued by naysayers and deniers to provide them with accurate information and direct them to our vast database of peer-reviewed research regarding the health effects of mold and other indoor air pollutants.

## **Education**

5. Work with medical organizations and government agencies to develop educational materials for physicians, nurses and other medical staff.
6. Assist with the development of training programs to teach physicians and medical staff about this important public health issue and to help them learn about treatment protocols.
7. Collaborate with medical organizations on the development of medical history forms that will enable physicians to gather important information on patient exposures to contaminants in their homes, schools and businesses.
8. Work with news agencies and journalists to help them develop accurate messages regarding the health effects of mold and other indoor air pollutants.

## **Promoting Safe Indoor Environments**

9. Provide accurate information to architects, builders, construction firms and others associated with developing homes, schools and business in order to promote construction of safe indoor environments.
10. Develop and disseminate a thorough and accurate set of guidelines regarding testing, evaluation and remediation of water-damaged buildings.
11. Develop a specific message for remediation of schools (because a high percentage of schools have already been identified as having indoor air quality problems and it is imperative that those structures be remediated correctly and in a timely manner).
12. Join with other interested parties to develop and promote the design and construction of housing that eliminates and/or minimizes the impact of indoor contaminants (e.g., emphasize the importance of using materials that promote good indoor air quality).
13. Connect with the organizations involved in the development of LEED guidelines and encourage them to expand their criteria to include indoor air quality issues.

## **Working with Government Agencies and Others**

Most government agencies are still downplaying or denying the truth about the health effects of mold and mycotoxins in water-damaged buildings, so progress is very slow in this area. You can learn more about the role of government agencies in our paper on “Naysayers and Deniers.”

14. Participate in and encourage open and good faith collaboration with international, federal, state and local government agencies and private and public organizations to develop written materials, actionable plans, resources to help individuals locate safe housing and other initiatives to address this important public health issue.
15. Recommend to the U.S. President and Congress that they allocate funds and appoint someone at the federal level to oversee this issue on a national level so there is a coordinated approach for dissemination of information and development of solutions for this important public health initiative.
16. Connect with insurance companies and encourage them to track and collect data on illness and death caused by indoor air pollutants.
17. Work with other organizations with a shared vision of raising public awareness about this important public health issue.

## **Developing Resources**

18. Participate in the development of a website and telephone hotline where people can get accurate information and a list of resources.
19. Identify funding sources in order to provide loans and grants to individuals and families who need emergency housing and personal supplies due to emergency situations that require them to leave their homes and apartments in order to protect their health because of mold, water damage and other environmental pollutants.
20. Assist with the development of a handbook for physicians, hospitals and medical organizations to inform them about the health effects of indoor contaminants and the appropriate testing and treatment protocols.
21. Create an international resource list of medical professionals, specialized services and products relevant to the diagnosis and management of this illness.
22. Provide consistent information to global relief agencies regarding the importance of requiring their volunteers to use personal protective equipment when assisting in disaster areas where there is likely to be indoor contaminants in water-damaged buildings.

## **Research**

23. Develop strategies to fund research to increase our understanding of the mechanisms involved in the development and treatment of this illness.
24. Identify more comprehensively the epidemiological aspects of this disease.
25. Participate in and initiate research projects to investigate the effectiveness of remediation methods and to identify new products that will aid in remediation efforts.
26. Work with national labs to develop rapid screening tests that identify those individuals with the potential to develop this illness and to identify those who are already showing symptomatic evidence of exposure.

Indoor air contaminants cause significant damage to health globally. For more details on the statistics and financial costs relating to indoor air contaminants, read our paper on the “Global Burden of Indoor Air Contaminants.”

## Conclusion

It is time we started to pay more attention to the indoor air we breathe.

It is time for our national and world leaders to develop a comprehensive public health response to this devastating epidemic that has the potential to cripple our individual and collective futures.

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*Please join us in our mission to promote healthy indoor environments for everyone around the globe.*

—Members of the Global Indoor Health Network—

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### Global Indoor Health Network

The Global Indoor Health Network (GIHN) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing education and awareness of the health effects of mold and other indoor contaminants. We are uniting experts and laypersons from the world, with members throughout the United States and in eleven other countries. GIHN's vision is a global community of individuals and organizations working together to ensure that comprehensive information and guidance concerning medical treatment, investigative techniques and solutions are available to address the effects of contaminants in the indoor environment of homes, schools and businesses.

Visit our website at: <https://www.globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>.