

# GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

"WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS"

<http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

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## GIHN New Members

We have two new members this month.

**Edmond Kyrillos, M.D.** lives in Canada. He is a treating physician in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, and is a member of the American Academy of Environmental Medicine (AAEM).

**Rachael Storey** lives in Washington, D.C. She became ill from exposure to mold and chemicals while teaching at a major university in Washington, D.C.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Kyrillos and Rachael to GIHN.

Individuals and businesses can request an application for membership by going to the GIHN website and completing the request form on the [Contact Us](#) page.

## Mount Sinai Recommends Statewide Network of "Centers of Excellence in Children's Environmental Health"

Children in New York suffer today from a wide array of chronic diseases. Many of these diseases are on the rise. **Evidence is strong and growing that environmental factors contribute to them.**

ASTHMA has tripled in the past three decades and become the leading cause of emergency room visits, hospitalizations and school absenteeism. It affects 250,000 New York children and is especially common among minority children. Air pollutants, mold and cigarette smoke all contribute to childhood asthma.

PRIMARY BRAIN CANCER among children has increased in incidence by nearly 40% from 1975 to 2004, according to the National Cancer Institute.

CHILDHOOD LEUKEMIA has increased in incidence by over 40%. Benzene, other solvents and pesticides are linked.

Children in New York today are at risk of exposure to more than 80,000 synthetic chemicals. A recent analysis estimates that the costs of disease of environmental origin in New York's children amount to \$4.35 billion each year.

**Diseases in children caused by toxic chemicals and other hazards in the environment can be prevented. The savings that result from disease prevention can amount to tens of billions of dollars each year.**

To improve the prevention and treatment of disease of environmental origin in New York's children, the Mount Sinai Children's Environmental Health Center recommends the creation of a statewide network of Centers of Excellence in Children's Environmental Health.

Click [here](#) to read the report.

See *Responding to Horror Stories* on page 2

## Responding to Horror Stories, Ontario Moves to Regulate Home Inspectors

For the biggest investment of most people's lives, hiring a home inspector is probably one of the most important things a prudent buyer can do.

The problem in Ontario, however, is that just about anyone can advertise themselves as a home inspector. There's currently no licensing, no mandatory training or standards and no single regulatory body overseeing those inspectors or protecting consumers.

"Anyone can call themselves a home inspector.... We've heard horror stories," said Stephan Tremblay, owner of Northern Inspection Group Inc. in Windsor.

The province is working toward changing that. The Ontario Ministry of Consumer Services has heard back from a panel of industry experts it set up, and the public is now being asked to comment on that group's recommendations.

Concerned about the bad name the industry is getting by some bad operators, Tremblay is a big advocate of licensing and regulatory improvements. One of his horror stories involves the Jamieson family of Windsor, first-time home buyers who lived a months-long nightmare after the property glowingly recommended by their realtor and home inspector turned out to be a mould-infested and sickness-causing structure filled with building code violations.

"As first-time home buyers, we were inexperienced," Michael Jamieson said. "We were later told that what was wrong should have been easy to spot by anyone who seemed to care."

Jamieson and his wife and three kids were forced into a leaky backyard camper, but, fortunately for them, their story attracted the attention of a number of those in the industry shocked at their sad situation and wanting to help, including Tremblay and television's home renovation star Bryan Baeumler.

With Lowe's Canada donating much of the needed materials, the Jamiesons will be moving back into their completely renovated South Windsor home next month.



## Responding to Horror Stories, Ontario Moves to Regulate Home Inspectors (cont'd)

Among the expert panel's recommendations to improve consumer protection:

- Home inspectors should be required to have a minimum of qualifications covering knowledge and field experience and then be regulated and licensed.
- A code of ethics should be established outlining expected behaviour, including disclosure of referral fees and incentives paid.
- Consumer should have access to a centralized registry of licensed home inspectors;
- Home inspectors should have mandatory liability insurance and there should be a complaints and disputes resolution process;
- An administrative and regulatory body should be established, overseen by government.

The report, titled, [A Closer Look – Qualifying Ontario's Home Inspectors](#), can be viewed on the Ontario Ministry of Consumer Services website. It contains 35 recommendations and the public has until Jan. 27 to provide input, with the regulatory regime expected to be established by 2015.

Tremblay said he's heard of retirees, firefighters and autoworkers, for example, in the Windsor area who advertise their home inspection services for cash (*but don't have the proper training or education*).

"What licensing is going to do is get rid of those guys," he said.

Click [here](#) to read the entire article.

See *NYC Mold in Public Housing* on page 3

## New York City Agrees to Remove Mold in Public Housing More Quickly

The New York City Housing Authority will deal more quickly and more thoroughly with mold in its apartments **as part of an agreement by the Bloomberg administration to settle a federal lawsuit by people living in housing projects and coping with asthma.**

Lawyers for the residents accused the agency of **violating the Americans with Disabilities Act** by allowing mold to persist, exacerbating the respiratory ailments of residents. Since Hurricane Sandy, mold has become more common in public housing. But even before the storm, tenants had long complained that maintenance workers failed to identify the leaks and other sources of moisture that cause the mold. Instead, the workers clean off walls and ceilings and repaint, and the mold often returns.

Since notifying the city of their intent to file a class-action suit, lawyers for the tenants have been negotiating a settlement. The agreement is expected to be filed in federal court in Manhattan on Tuesday, shortly after the lawsuit is filed. The settlement will require the authority not only to remove the mold but also to fix leaks, insulate pipes and address other sources of moisture. The agency will be required, in most cases, to fix the problem within seven to 15 days following a work order.

The agreement covers all of the more 400,000 tenants in public housing. But it requires housing officials to recognize asthma as a disability and to make accommodations for tenants with the condition. For example, the authority could be expected to relocate a person with asthma and his or her family to another apartment, or to use low-toxicity fungicides or to allow extra air-conditioning units in apartments.

The lawsuit spurring the changes was brought by the Natural Resources Defense Council and the National Center for Law and Economic Justice on behalf of public housing tenants and two nonprofit groups, Manhattan Together and South Bronx Churches.

**The Natural Resources Defense Council says the mold problem disproportionately affects low-income communities and is an important social justice issue.**



## New York City Agrees to Remove Mold in Public Housing More Quickly (cont'd)

Last December, in anticipation of the lawsuit, the plaintiffs' lawyers formally asked the Housing Authority "for reasonable accommodations and modifications" and entered into settlement discussions with administration officials earlier this year.

The Housing Authority does not keep numbers on tenants diagnosed with asthma, but lawyers for the residents estimate the number is "in the thousands" given the location of many projects in areas of the city with high asthma rates, such as Harlem and the South Bronx. Many asthma sufferers are children and their parents often restrict their movement through the apartment to keep them out of rooms with mold. At least one health study has found that children in New York City public housing have higher odds of having asthma than do children living in all types of private housing.

**Housing officials concede the incidence of mold rose after Hurricane Sandy** but said they have made dealing with it a priority.

The settlement includes monitoring provisions, including regular status reports to the plaintiffs' attorneys and periodic samplings of mold complaints by housing officials to determine if work orders are completed in the required time.

Click [here](#) to read the entire article.

See *Fungal Pathogen...Spaceflight* on page 4

## Fungal Pathogen Shows Profound Effects from Spaceflight

At Arizona State University's Biodesign Institute, Cheryl Nickerson and her team have been investigating the intriguing effects of spaceflight on microbial pathogens.

In a new paper appearing in the current issue of the journal *PLOS ONE* ("Spaceflight Enhances Cell Aggregation and Random Budding in *Candida albicans*"), the team reports their recent work examining spaceflight-induced responses in and infectious disease potential of the fungal pathogen, *Candida albicans*. Lead author Aurélie Crabbé joins a multi-institute collaborative research team in this study, which represents the first global gene expression profiling and phenotypic characterization of a fungal pathogen during spaceflight.

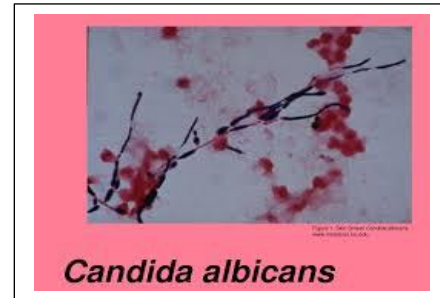
The new study reports the differential regulation of 452 genes in spaceflight-cultured *C. albicans*, compared to fungal cells cultured under otherwise identical ground-based conditions. The expression of a wide variety of functionally diverse gene families was altered, including those regulating cell aggregation and budding, biofilm formation and resistance to pathogenesis-related stresses and antifungal drugs. In agreement with the gene expression data, *C. albicans* demonstrated enhanced cell aggregation and a differential budding pattern in response to growth under microgravity conditions.

"Our research has important medical implications for spaceflight safety and may also shed light on the as-yet poorly understood mechanisms of pathogen infection and disease trajectory, both in space and on earth."

*Candida* is a type of fungus—a eukaryotic microorganism. It is often found in soils and water and is ubiquitous in man-made environments, including the space shuttle and International Space Station.

Although it exists in 80 percent of the human population as an unobtrusive guest, *C. albicans* is an opportunistic pathogen, turning hostile under particular conditions. This process involves a transition from unicellular, yeast-like cells to a multicellular, filamentous and invasive form, triggered by specific environmental cues.

Click [here](#) to read the entire article.



*New study reports the differential regulation of 452 genes in spaceflight-cultured Candida albicans*

## International Conference on Children's Health and the Environment (Jerusalem)

More than 80,000 new chemicals have been developed and released into the environment in the past four decades. And during the same period, the rates of birth defects, autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, asthma and other disorders that affect children have increased.

The Seventh International Conference on Children's Health and the Environment, called "A Healthier World for Our Children" was held recently at Jerusalem's Dan Panorama Hotel, where an interdisciplinary group of scientists compared notes.

Dr. Ruth Etzel, an environmental epidemiologist at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee attended the conference. She said "The environment underlies almost all illnesses."

A German toxicologist at the conference, Dr. Marike Kolossa, personally witnessed the challenge of bringing the high environmental standards of West Germany to East Germany after the unification. A biology graduate, she said she "wanted to protect man and the environment. It was known already in the early 1980s that the disappearance of species was affecting the environment."

**Kolossa said she was "absolutely impressed by Israel's new bio-monitoring program of pesticides, heavy metals and other dangerous substances. Israel now has a modern and high scientific level, and its research in the field is very good."**

Click [here](#) to read the entire article.

See *Mold Legislation in New Jersey* on page 5

## Update on Mold Legislation in New Jersey

*GIHN member John McBride is involved with the proposed mold legislation in New Jersey. Here's an update:*

Legislation sponsored by Assembly Democrats Daniel R. Benson, Celeste M. Riley and Ruben Ramos requiring the state to establish standards for exposure limits to mold in residential buildings and certification of mold inspectors and abatement workers was approved Thursday (December 12, 2013) by a Senate committee.

The bill (A-1588) would require the state Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in consultation with the state Department of Health and Senior Services to establish standards for exposure limits to mold in residential buildings, and procedures for the inspection, identification, and evaluation of the interior of residential buildings for mold.

"This creates rules and regulations that currently don't exist to protect the public health and safety against mold," said Benson (D-Mercer/Middlesex).

"Mold can exacerbate health problems including asthma and allergies in children, and currently there are no standards to control its harmful potential," said Riley (D-Cumberland/Gloucester/Salem). "Other states have passed laws establishing guidelines, and now it's time for New Jersey to follow suit and protect its residents against the health risks that can be caused by mold."

Under the bill, the DCA would also be required to: (1) establish standards for mold hazard abatement procedures including specialized cleaning, repairs, maintenance, painting, temporary containment and ongoing monitoring of mold hazards or potential hazards; and (2) establish a certification program for persons who inspect for the presence of mold hazards in residential buildings and who perform mold hazard abatement work in residential buildings.

The bill was released by the Senate Budget Committee and now awaits final legislative consideration by the full Senate.

Click [here](#) to read the entire article.



## New Jersey Family Forced to Leave Belongings in Mold-Infested Home

A family who was living in Hamilton Township (Mercer County) has abandoned a majority of their belongings in a mold-infested home which they had been renting.

The Harley family, including three adults and two children, moved into a home on Peter Rafferty Drive in May. Several months later, all began developing cold-like symptoms.

Doctors were unable to determine the cause but Kelly Harley noticed mold growing in the basement.

By asking neighbors Kelly Harley was made aware that the house had previously flooded up to four feet, and the landlord--Rajinder Chawla--had not properly remediated the property, causing several prior tenants to also fall sick and move out.

Harley hired a Toms River-based remediation company to inspect the home. The result was several types of mold found throughout the home, including air ducts, rugs, floors and drywall.

The Harleys left all their belongings behind and moved to a new home in Allentown, but the landlord wants to kick them out of the house because they haven't been living there for months. Harley said she doesn't want Chawla to be able to patch up the home and rent to another victim.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

See *Fresh Air at an Indoor Casino?* on page 6

## Breathing Fresh Air at an Indoor Casino? Is it Possible?

*There are many indoor air pollutants inside casinos including tobacco smoke, fragrances, volatile organic compounds, chemical cleaning products and commercial air fresheners (that contain chemicals and are pumped throughout the property via the HVAC system). There is currently a products liability and negligence [lawsuit](#) by a former casino worker in Las Vegas against MGM Resorts International for damages caused to her health by poor indoor air quality due to the AromaSys scent branding product (air freshener). There are other casino employees who have contacted the attorney and are interested in joining the lawsuit.*

From the article: Breathing fresh air at an indoor casino? Is it even possible? Barona is gambling that it can do it. The East County (California) casino has begun the installation of a multimillion dollar air filtration and purification system to enhance indoor air quality.

Rick Salinas, general manager of Barona Resort & Casino, said the air cleaning system will be installed this month by Synergy Environmental and is “the most advanced air filtration and purification system on the market.”

Barona tested the air cleaning purification system for several months in the casino’s off-track betting room. A report from the casino notes that an independent air quality testing company measured the results and confirmed that the system was effective in reducing volatile organic compound concentrations to “extremely low levels,” and also was effective in handling spikes caused by cigarette contaminants.

The report notes that Barona also has taken steps to increase the air circulation throughout the casino. Salinas said that 150 perforated air returns in the casino were recently replaced with technologically advanced louvered returns that increased air flow by 66 percent.

Click [here](#) to read the entire article.

**Next Newsletter: February 1, 2014**



*Barona Resort & Casino in California*

## January is National Radon Action Month

The U.S. EPA has designated January as National Radon Action Month.

Radon is a radioactive gas that comes from the decay of naturally occurring radium and uranium in the earth. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer overall and the LEADING cause in non-smokers. The EPA estimates that as many as 21,000 lung cancer deaths a year are caused by radon. Radon is colorless and odorless, so the only way to know if your home has a problem is to test for it.

The EPA and the US Surgeon General recommend testing all homes below the third floor for radon and if the levels are high, take steps to lower them.

Click [here](#) for more info on radon.

**New law in Minnesota.** January 1, 2014, marks the start of a new year and, with that, new laws go into effect. [In Minnesota](#), **one of those laws will require home sellers to disclose radon gas testing.**

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### Quick Links:

**Website:** <http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

**Members:**  
<http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/members.html>

**Position Statement:**  
[http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/files/GIHN\\_position\\_statement\\_Revised\\_12\\_17\\_2012.pdf](http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/files/GIHN_position_statement_Revised_12_17_2012.pdf)

**Working Together for Healthy Indoor Environments**