

GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

"WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS"

<http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

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GIHN Member Announcements

Please join me in welcoming our newest member.

Dr. Joseph Brewer is an Infectious Disease physician located in Kansas City, Missouri. He has an interest in the clinical aspects of mold illness, disease associations, diagnosis and treatment.

Dr. Alan Vinitzky testified in Washington, D.C. on February 27 in regard to proposed legislation about pesticides. Read more about it on page 4.

Dr. Lisa Nagy gave a 90-minute presentation last week at an EPA meeting in Boston, Massachusetts. Her presentation was titled Chemical Sensitivity in the Average Person - Chronic Health Effects of Mold and Chemical Exposure. She emphasized treating dysautonomia and adrenal insufficiency immediately prior to detoxification. Dr. Nagy's work and personal story of survival from mold toxicity will be featured in the Cornell Medicine Magazine later this year.

National Asbestos Awareness Week

It's a pleasant surprise to see politicians working to increase awareness of the national tragedy we know as asbestos.

Earlier this week, U.S. Sen. Max Baucus of Montana and other senators introduced a resolution declaring the first week of April as "National Asbestos Awareness Week." The resolution was passed unanimously the same day. This is the eighth time that our lawmakers have passed the "National Asbestos Awareness Week" resolution since 2005.

Such a resolution will help shine a light on the dangers of asbestos exposure and the diseases the material causes, such as mesothelioma.

Baucus has been a key voice in asbestos awareness throughout the years. For Baucus, it's an issue that hits close to home. Baucus has helped provide support for the people who live near Libby, Mont., where the effects of asbestos exposure have nearly wiped out the small town.

The fact that our politicians have recognized that asbestos isn't just a Libby, Mont., problem, but a national one is a step in the right direction. Asbestos hurts everybody from homebuilders to housewives, to construction workers and pipefitters. Asbestos is still used in pipes and some building products, primarily roofing materials, in the United States. And according to the 2008-2009 Annual Report from the President's Cancer Panel, construction workers are 11 times more likely to develop mesothelioma due to asbestos exposure at the site.

The United States is one of the few developed countries that has not banned asbestos. Studies estimate that 107,000 workers around the world die every year of an asbestos disease, according to the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization.

[National Asbestos Awareness Week](#)

See *GIHN position statement* on page 2

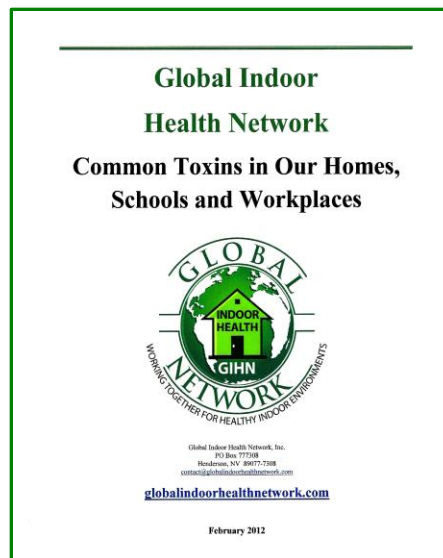
GIHN Position Statement

On February 28, 2012, the Global Indoor Health Network released its position statement titled “Common Toxins in our Homes, Schools and Workplaces.” The purpose of this paper is to highlight the main threats to human health hidden in our homes, schools and workplaces. Some agents are radioactive and some are toxins, while others are outright poisons. The list includes mold, bacteria, mycotoxins, endotoxins, microbial particulates, radon, lead, asbestos, chemicals, pesticides, Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and other contaminants. Many of these contaminants occur in the interior of water-damaged buildings, but some of these exist in buildings without water damage. Some sick buildings lead to slowly deteriorating disease while others can bring death quickly.

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. Curiously, while heart disease, cancers and rare exotic illnesses frequently grab headlines, illness due to environmental sources, though incredibly common, often receive little or no media coverage.

According to an EPA spokesman, indoor air pollution causes 50% of illnesses globally. This statistic should catch the attention of every physician, every lawmaker and every layperson reading this paper. That’s more than all the cancers and all the heart disease combined. It is time we started to pay more attention to the indoor air we breathe. It is staggering to comprehend the enormous impact on our global society as literally millions of individuals and families are harmed by contaminants inside our homes, schools and workplaces.

Mold illness, mold-related illness and biotoxin-related illness are euphemisms which are collectively referred to as Multi-system Exposure Related Illness (MERI) in this paper. MERI is a multi-symptom, multi-system disease occurring in many people due usually to long-term exposure to the interior of water-damaged buildings. While a massive acute exposure can lead to MERI, the most common mechanism is chronic exposure to low level toxins leading to an inflammatory response in the body. Written by treating physicians and researchers in the field, this paper is a collaborative effort which provides detailed information on the pathophysiology and diagnosis of MERI, as well as details regarding the treatment protocols used by some of the leading physicians.



GIHN Position Statement (continued)

It is time 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. 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.

Authors: Scott W. McMahon, MD; Janette Hope, MD; Alan R. Vinitsky, MD; Jack Dwayne Thrasher, PhD; William J. Rea, MD; and Michael R. Gray, MD.

The paper can be found, in its entirety, at:

http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/files/GIHN_position_statement.pdf

The Global Indoor Health Network (GIHN) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is uniting experts and laypersons from the world. 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 <http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>.

See *Mould in School Portable* on page 3

Mould in School Portable Linked to Woman's Illness

The reason for Carmen Griffith's painful cough and almost constant headaches was found behind the wallpaper in her office in a portable at Chelsea Elementary School. "It was black with mould," said Griffith, who headed the school's after-school daycare program from 1994 to 2009.

"They took the wallpaper and everything off and it was unreal how bad it was," Griffith said. "It was terrible."

Griffith, now retired, is in a battle with Quebec's worker compensation board to cover the cost of her medications.

Meanwhile, her former employer, the Western Quebec School Board, says all portables are regularly examined for mould. The board regularly tests the air quality in portables and other school facilities. Each school is tested every five years, unless someone specifically complains.

They haven't found the problems because they haven't been doing the right tests, Griffith said.

Griffith said she began to feel seriously unwell several years after her office was moved to a portable classroom attached to the school. She said her doctors began to suspect her work environment was the problem as her symptoms tended to coincide with times she was working at the school, such as the fall and winter. Her condition improved in the summer and during school breaks.

Detecting mould in buildings is very difficult since even specific tests, called stool samples, can come back showing there are no problems with mould, said Dr. Jennifer Armstrong, an environmental health specialist and one of Griffith's doctors.

Schools can take precautions in advance, however. One example Armstrong cited was replacing carpets with hard surfaces such as linoleum so they didn't remain wet for long after children walked across them with snow-covered boots.

[Mould in School Portable Linked to Woman's Illness](#)



Lake County, Florida, fire stations battle mold

Lake County Fire Stations Battle Mold Issues

Two relatively new fire stations in Lake County have serious mold problems. It's so bad that firefighters will have to operate out of trailers while the mold is cleaned up.

Some say the buildings are too new to have a problem like this, but for up to 50 days, firefighters will have to live in a trailer in the parking lot while the mold is removed.

At Lake County Fire Rescue Station No. 112, they found something lurking in the bathroom.

"The first sign that we noticed was some of the firefighters saw discoloration on some of the ceiling tiles within the fire station," Lake County spokeswoman Kelly Lafollette said.

It's mold in the drop-down ceiling. It's the same issue at station No. 10 in Astor. County officials said it's connected to heating and cooling problems in the attics. Both stations were built in 2002 by the same contractor.

That to me -- is a design defect," said Vance Jochim of Lake County Fiscal Rangers, a government watchdog group.

Jochim said the \$180,000 cleaning bill to get rid of the mold and improve the air conditioning system ought to be covered by the original builder, not the taxpayers.

[Lake County Fire Stations Battle Mold Issues](#)

See *Dr. Vinitsky's testimony* on page 4

Dr. Alan Vinitsky Testifies about Pesticide Exposure

Among the presenters on Monday, February 27, at a District of Columbia hearing on behalf of the Pesticide Education and Control Amendment Act of 2012, Dr. Alan Vinitsky offered some of the more compelling information to the committee evaluating the legislation:

INTRODUCTION

I am a Board Certified Pediatrician and Internist, practicing in Montgomery County for 33 years. I have special interest in Environmental Medicine — with a focus on preventing toxic exposures to persons of all ages — and identifying and treating illnesses that result from toxic exposure and their consequences. I have extensive experience in treating patients who suffered the consequences of pesticide exposures.

I speak in support of the Pesticide Education and Control Amendment Act of 2012.

What we don't like about insects, rodents, weeds, fungi, we seek to destroy. The manner in which we accomplish that goal is what we discuss today.

Integrated Pest Management provides powerful means to reduce toxic exposure from pesticides, while promoting the common goal of achieving a more pleasant environment — free of undesirables.

We are exposed to pesticides by inhaling, ingesting, or getting them on our skin or mucus membranes. Infants and children are especially susceptible because the size of their skin relative to their body weight is greater than that of adults. They are more likely to roll and play on the grass, fall on the ground, or play on floors or carpets. They are more likely to put their hands in their mouths and share toys.

Pesticides that can't be removed will accumulate in nerves, cells, linings of cells, and organs — especially where there is fat. That includes brain, liver, pancreas, thyroid, kidneys, lymph nodes, heart and lungs, and gastro-intestinal tract. And, if necessary, your body will make more fat to store even more chemicals.



Dr. Alan Vinitsky testifies

Dr. Alan Vinitsky Testifies about Pesticide Exposure (continued)

Because pesticides function by different mechanisms, my brief discussion cannot be all inclusive. However, many pesticides affect the nervous system or inactivate a chemical process, so that a certain critical function of the target is corrupted, and the target dies. Similar consequences may occur in humans.

Children or adults can suffer from asthma, heart problems, irregular heart rhythms, recurrent infections, rashes, fatigue, headaches, dizziness, muscle aches, attention deficit-like behavior, altered vision, sense of smell, hearing, taste or touch, balance, Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, dementia, seizures, weight gain, altered hormones — including premature puberty, growth disruption, ovarian and testicular dysfunction, thyroid problems, and diabetes.

There can be increased infertility, increased miscarriages, increased congenital malformations, or a fetus can take on the pesticides, and be saddled with the PESTICIDE burden at birth.

Dr. Vinitsky provided details about one of his patients who had been exposed to pesticides at preschool and had symptoms for several years prior to being treated at his office.

This article recommends all the components of your pending legislation — Integrated Pest Management, registering, surveillance, reporting, and teaching. I urge you to pass this legislation for the safety of D.C.'s Children.

[Read the article about Dr. Vinitsky's testimony](#)

Public Housing Residents Sue the City

Residents of a trio of Fort Greene housing projects — including one woman showing off the a toothbrush she uses to fight persistent mold — sued the city (of Brooklyn) on Thursday, claiming that the Housing Authority is a “slumlord” that violates laws that mandate timely repairs.

The 13 plaintiffs, many of whom live in the Ingersoll, Whitman, and Farragut houses, claim in their lawsuit that the city’s public housing agency routinely violates the Housing Maintenance Code because residents wait far longer than the maximum 30 days for a pressing issue and 90 days for basic repairs.

“If any [other] landlord made repairs in two years, you’d call that landlord a slumlord,” said lawyer Brent Meltzer, who is representing the tenants.

Mr. Meltzer’s clients said that such problems as mildew or broken windows have gone unrepaired for years, despite repeated repair requests. Families United for Racial and Economic Equality, an advocacy group, said that the repair backlog has gotten worse since a computerized ticket system was implemented in 2007.

One of the plaintiffs, Sandra Davis-Knight, said her apartment in the Farragut Houses has had water damage for 23 years, but the Housing Authority has been unable to fix the leak.

For years, Davis-Knight and her son used toothbrushes to scrub away the resulting mold — but in May, 2010, she called in a complaint for urgent repairs. She’s still waiting for a fix — even after being admitted to Brooklyn Hospital after coughing up blood that she says is connected to the spores.

Now when she closes her window, she said, the smell is unbearable.

“I have to live with the windows open during winter,” said Ms. Davis-Knight. “Because we pay such low rent they don’t consider us. We’re just overlooked.”

[Public Housing Residents--One with her Mold Brush--Sue the City](#)



Sharon Davis-Knight shows off the toothbrush she uses to clear away mold in the bathroom of her apartment.

New York Appeals Court says Mold Case can Go Forward

An appeals court on Tuesday clarified a 2008 ruling, finding that it did not bar individuals from pursuing claims that they developed illnesses from toxic mold.

In a 3-2 decision, the Appellate Division, First Department, held that Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Marcy Friedman erred when she dismissed a suit brought by Brenda Cornell against the owners of her apartment building at 360 W. 51st St. Cornell claimed she suffered dizziness, a rash, congestion and other symptoms due to the presence of dangerous mold in the building, where she lived for six years.

The First Department ruled Tuesday that it did not intend Fraser to set forth a "categorical rule."

"We never disavowed the underlying theory that exposure to mold may, under certain circumstances, give rise to respiratory and other ailments," wrote Justice Sallie Manzanet-Daniels for the majority, which included Justices David Saxe and Sheila Abdus-Salaam.

Morrell Berkowitz, the lawyer for Cornell, said the decision has "tremendous significance" for similarly situated plaintiffs in the First Department.

"It's not as clear-cut as smoking causes cancer, yet," he said of the link between mold and illness. "But it's pretty damn close. It's certainly not junk science."

[Appeals Court Says Mold Case can Go Forward](#)

See *Queens Family...Health Problems* on page 6

Queens Family Suffering Health Problems from Mold-Infested Home

Inky-black mold spores speckling a Jamaica home have left a Queens family unable to breathe easy.

Patrina Smith, who receives Section 8 rent subsidies first noticed the toxic fungi in February 2011, a month after she, her two daughters and granddaughter moved in to the two-family home.

Spores have now overtaken the walls, floors and furniture, making the apartment, by many accounts, uninhabitable. But Smith cannot move until she gets approval from the city Housing Authority, which administers the federally subsidized program.

"I should not have to live like this," Smith said while showing the mold-ravaged home to the Daily News. "It's so disgusting."

Meanwhile, the family's health is ailing.

Smith, 48, and daughter Shatima, 27, had never used an asthma inhaler before moving to the house, but are now dependent on albuterol, Smith said. Her asthmatic daughter, Latiqua, 17, has been rushed to the emergency room three times in six months. And she said a doctor told her the mold exacerbates her 3-year-old granddaughter Si-nyai's respiratory problems.

"This apartment is killing me," Smith said.

The family now sleeps together in the least moldy bedroom.

The home, owned by landlord Debra Morgan, has 32 code violations with the city Department of Housing Preservation and Development. Records show four mold summonses were issued Feb. 16 — a Class C offense, indicating an immediate hazard. Landlords have 24 hours to fix the issue, according to an HPD spokesman.

[Queens Family Suffering Health Problems](#)

[Next Newsletter: Friday, March 23, 2012](#)



Patrina Smith shows extensive mold problem

New Paper on Neurologic Effects of Indoor Molds (by Jedrychowski, et al)

In the last decade, the neurologic effects of various air pollutants have been the focus of increasing attention. The main purpose of this study was to assess the potential impact of early childhood exposure to indoor molds on the subsequent cognitive function of 6-year old children. The results of this study are based on the six-year follow-up of 277 babies born at term to mothers participating in a prospective cohort study in Krakow, Poland. The study participants are all non-smoking pregnant women who were free of chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension.

The presence of visible mold patches on indoor walls was monitored at regular time intervals over gestation and after birth up to the age of five. The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-R) was administered to children at age 6.

In conclusion, the results of this study draw attention to the harmful effect of early postnatal exposure to indoor molds on children's cognitive development and provide additional evidence on the role of environmental determinants in human cognitive development.

[New paper on neurologic effects of indoor molds](#)

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Working Together for Healthy Indoor Environments