

# GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

"WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS"

<http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

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## GIHN Member Announcement

Please join me in welcoming our newest member.

**Dr. Roberta Madison.** Dr. Madison earned her Ph.D. in Environmental Health at UCLA. She is a statistician and a Fellow of the American College of Epidemiology. She has been involved in research projects and papers regarding mold exposure and other environmental health issues.

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## Allergies and Chemical Sensitivity

Check out this March 21 article on allergies and chemical sensitivity.

**"Chemical sensitivity:** not the same as an allergic reaction, the inability of the affected person to tolerate environmental chemicals, such as pesticides, solvent fumes and other air contaminants. Symptoms can include respiratory problems, nausea, headache, fatigue, cognitive dysfunction, heart arrhythmia, or seizures."

[Article on allergies and chemical sensitivity from HealthTalk Staff](#)

## Condo Association Accused of Hiding Mold Problems from Tenants

A company managing condominiums and apartment rental units is being accused of exposing residents to potentially dangerous mold and not telling them about it.

Sonia Alvarado's home is sealed in plastic. To get a glimpse inside, she puts on a special protective mask and mentally braces herself.

"It's a brand new mask," said Alvarado. "That is the only way that I can go in there."

She says her home makes her sick. For more than a half of a year, Alvarado says she has suffered increasing health problems including horrible rashes, hives all over her body and lung problems.

She says common areas like the laundry room also had mold on the walls. Neighbors report mold on ceilings, trim and rotted water-damaged windows. Shadia Kemper used to live below Alvarado. Kemper says her 5-year-old daughter got ill every night until she noticed black spots on the windows and blinds.

"As soon as we put her to bed, it would wake her up out of her sleep," says Kemper. "She couldn't sleep. She couldn't breathe."

They moved out of the building and her daughter is better. Alvarado also is living elsewhere, but she's not better. She says a fungus connected to mold has been found in her lungs.

"So everything inside me is inflamed as well as half of my heart," says Alvarado. Attorney Jeff Asperger represents Alvarado and says the company would not give her the mold test results until a lawsuit was filed.

[Condo Association Accused of Hiding Mold Problems from Tenants](#)

See *U.K.—Mouldy Walls are Health Risk* on page 2

## U.K. Housing Chiefs Warned Mouldy Walls are Health Risk to Baby

Health chiefs have warned housing bosses that a baby's health is at risk if they do not take action to remove mould that has infested his home.

Day and night, seven-month-old Kai Hayter breathes in spores from fungus growing on walls, including in his bedroom.

But despite calls for urgent action by his family doctor and health visitor, Kai's parents, Tamryn Clewlow and Darren Hayter, claim that housing bosses have done little to stop the infestation.

Tamryn, 24, said: "Something has to be done. It's Kai's health I fear for."

"They are not taking this seriously."

Condensation, furry mould and yellow liquid have been appearing throughout the Aster housing association flat in St Boniface Court, North Baddesley, since the family moved into the two-bedroom property, which is below ground level, in November.

They believe the mould, as well as faulty heating, could be behind Kai contracting bronchitis over Christmas, from which he has struggled to recover. Recently Kai has also been diagnosed with a hereditary kidney problem but doctors cannot investigate under anaesthetic in hospital while he is ill. Tamryn's asthma has also worsened.

In January, family GP Ian Keith and Kai's health visiting team wrote to housing bosses demanding urgent action. Dr. Keith, of Alma Road surgery in Romsey, wrote: "Kai is particularly young and vulnerable. Certainly any respiratory tract infections that he might contract while living in such conditions would be deleterious to his health."

The couple say that the housing association has done little to help them, and better ventilation promised months ago has not materialised.

[Housing Chiefs Warned Mouldy Walls are Health Risk to Baby](#)



*Mouldy wall in baby Kai Hayter's home*

## Fragrance-Free Products are Safer

Manufacturers who use fragrance for personal care products won't tell you what's in their chemical mixtures, hiding that information as a highly guarded trade secret. The federal law governing ingredient disclosure for cosmetics explicitly exempts fragrance ingredients, which makes consumers unable to make informed choices about what they are putting onto their skin.

"We're spraying this stuff on our bodies and in our homes, and we have no idea what's in it," said Stacy Malkan, co-founder of the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics. "We do know that typical fragrances often contain hazardous synthetic chemicals."

Fragrance testing by advocacy organizations has revealed the average fragrance product has fourteen secret chemicals not listed on the label. Better known components of fragrance, including phthalates and DEP, are hormone disruptors.

**According to one peer-reviewed study, 30% of people report adverse physical effects from fragrance exposure. The number is nearly 40% of people with asthma.**

Strong reactions to chemical fragrances, plus a desire to bring fewer chemicals into the home have led consumers to demand manufacturers change their ways

"But we can't just shop our way out of this problem," Malkan said. "We also have to pass smarter laws to require companies to stop using hazardous chemicals and to require them to be honest about their products."

[Are Fragrance-Free Products Safer?](#)

[Fragrance Sensitivity: When Scents Cause Symptoms](#)

See *How Corporations Corrupt Science* on page 3

## How Corporations Corrupt Science at the Public's Expense

Federal decision makers need access to the best available science in order to craft policies that protect our health, safety and environment. Unfortunately, censorship of scientists and the manipulation, distortion and suppression of scientific information have threatened federal science in recent years.

This problem has sparked much debate, but few have identified the key driver of political interference in federal science: the inappropriate influence of companies with a financial stake in the outcome.

A new UCS (Union of Concerned Scientists) report, "Heads They Win, Tails We Lose," shows how corporations influence the use of science in federal decision making to serve their own interests.

### Methods of Abuse

The report describes five basic methods that corporations use to influence the scientific and policy-making processes:

1. **Corrupting the Science.** Corporations suppress research, intimidate scientists, manipulate study designs, ghostwrite scientific articles, and selectively publish results that suit their interests.
2. **Shaping Public Perception.** Private interests downplay evidence, exaggerate uncertainty, vilify scientists, hide behind front groups, and feed the media slanted news stories.
3. **Restricting Agency Effectiveness.** Companies attack the science behind agency policy, hinder the regulatory process, corrupt advisory panels, exploit the "revolving door" between corporate and government employment, censor scientists, and withhold information from the public.
4. **Influencing Congress.** By spending billions of dollars on lobbying and campaign contributions, corporate interests gain undue access to members of Congress, encouraging them to challenge scientific consensus, delay action on critical problems, and shape the use of science in policy making.



## How Corporations Corrupt Science at the Public's Expense (continued)

5. **Exploiting Judicial Pathways.** Corporate interests have expanded their influence on the judicial system, used the courts to undermine science, and exploited judicial processes to bully and silence scientists.

The report identifies five key areas where further federal commitments to protect science from undue corporate influence are needed: protecting government scientists from retaliation and intimidation; making government more transparent and accountable; reforming the regulatory process; strengthening scientific advice to government; and strengthening monitoring and enforcement.

Corporations, nonprofits, academic institutions, scientific societies, and the media also have critical roles to play in reducing abuses of science in federal decision making. These institutions should:

- promote honest scientific investigation and open discussion of research results;
- refrain from actual or perceived acts of scientific misconduct;
- embrace transparency and avoid conflicts of interest.

Inappropriate corporate interference in science extends its tentacles into every aspect of federal science-based policy-making.

[How Corporations Corrupt Science at the Public's Expense](#)

To read the full report:

[Heads They Win, Tails We Lose](#)

See *Member Profile: Dr. Lisa Nagy* on page 4

## Member Profile: Dr. Lisa Nagy

Dr. Lisa Nagy almost died from mold. She became ill ten years ago in Los Angeles from an aquarium shed built into her living room wall surrounding 5,000 gallons of water and fish. Eventually, the mold that grew on the wood got into the air intake which the previous owner connected to the home. Lisa's dog and husband all eventually became Addisonian. Her husband had Parkinson's symptoms and she developed a Lou Gehrig's type picture and looked like she would not live very long. She realized later, while being treated by Bill Rea in Dallas ([www.ehcd.com](http://www.ehcd.com)), that she was very chemically sensitive and began intensive treatment.

Because she wore so much perfume and used scented detergent and softener, this prevented her from noticing the symptoms of Chemical Sensitivity -- a process called masking. Lisa was treated for a few months with IV vitamins, sauna, provocation and neutralization allergy testing and antigens, ALF (Autogenous Lymphocyte Factor), hormone replacement, and rotational diet, as well as oxygen for two hours a day by non-toxic mask.

Lisa has been an activist and educator in environmental health since she was well enough to travel in 2006. She has been working on the CDC's National Conversation on Chemicals and Public Health and wrote a mold recommendation which was approved by the group and is now published on the CDC website. She was named to the NIH Roundtable on Building and Health. In 2012, she spoke to the medical students at the University of Pennsylvania and to the EPA in Boston, and her presentations were very well received and recorded. Lisa hopes to partner with the EPA and the Massachusetts Medical Society, where she is a delegate, to form a committee on Environmental and Comprehensive Medicine.

Lisa is focused on Medical School education, congressional support for NIEHS research funds and the building of a major facility for the Chemically Sensitive and others (autistic children, neurologic patients, autoimmune and psychiatric disorders) to be assessed and treated by the methods she has learned through the American Academy of Environmental Medicine ([www.aaem.com](http://www.aaem.com)).



*Dr. Lisa Nagy*

## Member Profile: Dr. Lisa Nagy (cont'd)

Thankful that she has regained her health, she is practicing medicine on Martha's Vineyard. She is seeing people with all types of chronic illness from around the country. Her practice is called Vineyard Personalized Medicine LLC. Her website is [www.lisanagy.com](http://www.lisanagy.com), and her phone number is 508-693-1300. She also runs a non-profit organization called The Preventive and Environmental Health Alliance Inc. Lisa has helped a couple thousand patients over the last 6 years for free as well as taking donations for her time. She is working on a book as well as a film on the subject in the coming year.

Dr. Nagy has seen the following (partial list of) symptoms of environmental illness or chemical sensitivity in her patients:

- Adverse reactions to fragrances, diesel exhaust, fabric softeners and other scented products
- Headaches on waking in the morning
- Bra feels too constricting - ischemic tissue intolerant of tight clothing
- Clothing tags itch the back of the neck and must be cut out
- Person becomes tired or sick shopping in the mall or stores
- Dysautonomia (fast heart beat)
- Heat intolerance
- Electrical sensitivity

For more information, read Dr. Nagy's paper:

[Women's Health is Environmental Health: Avoiding Common Toxic Exposures](#)

## Erionite—the next Asbestos

Erionite, like asbestos, is considered a cancer-causing substance by the National Toxicology Program and the International Agency for Research on Cancer. Studies have shown erionite to be associated with mesothelioma. Before these recent studies the only substance associated with mesothelioma was asbestos. While asbestos is regulated, erionite is not regulated nor are there any consensus standards for it.

Erionite occurs naturally in the environment, is a silicate mineral and forms brittle, wool-like fibrous masses. It is usually found in volcanic ash that has been altered by weathering and ground water. Disturbance of this material can generate airborne fibers with physical properties and health effects similar to asbestos.

Until recently, erionite was not considered a potential hazard in North America. Evidence now has linked exposure with serious adverse health effects. There is little known about exposures of U. S. workers, but erionite-related disease has most often been reported in road construction and maintenance workers with potential occupational exposure to erionite-containing gravel used in road surfacing. The first North American with erionite-related lung disease reported in 1981 was a road construction worker in Utah. In 2008, a mesothelioma cluster was described in a small village in central Mexico.

Erionite is concentrated in the western United States, including North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, Washington, Oregon and California.

Risk reduction recommendations from the CDC website:

- Training workers about the potential hazards of erionite and control methods for reducing the potential for exposure.
- Knowing where erionite containing material is present and will be encountered prior to beginning any work.
- Avoiding the use of erionite containing aggregate whenever possible.
- Using wet methods to reduce dust generation for road and other work such as in quarries where erionite is present.
- Limiting the number of workers who will be engaged in work with erionite.



*International Union of Operating Engineers*

## Erionite—the next Asbestos (cont'd)

- Establishing decontamination protocols including change of clothing, showering before leaving the worksite, and appropriate cleaning/disposal of personal protective equipment.
- Ensuring work clothing is not washed at home to prevent erionite fibers from being brought home on work clothes and boots.
- Prohibiting dry sweeping, the use of leaf blowers, or the use of compressed air for cleaning.
- Protecting employees with personal protective equipment, including respiratory protection.
- Prohibiting eating, drinking, or smoking in dusty work areas where erionite fibers may be airborne. Workers should move away from the work area for breaks and wash their hands and face before eating, drinking, or smoking.
- Establishing protocols for vehicle use on erionite containing roads (drive slowly, vents closed, windows up).
- Wet washing equipment and vehicle exteriors, and wet cleaning/High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter vacuuming of vehicle interiors.
- Following Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) procedures for proper dispose of waste and debris that contains erionite.
- Limiting bystander exposure by preventing visitors and coworkers from standing in work areas where erionite fibers may become airborne.

To read the entire article:

[Is Erionite the next Asbestos?](#)

To read the CDC's information on Erionite:

[Erionite: An Emerging North American Hazard](#)

See *Second-Hand Smoke Exposure* on page 6



## Lung Disease Linked to Kids' Second-Hand Smoke Exposure

Children exposed to tobacco smoke may be at significantly increased risk of developing chronic pulmonary obstructive disorder (COPD) in adulthood, new research suggests.

A study of 433 patients with COPD found that children who had been exposed to tobacco smoke had nearly double the risk of developing the disease in adulthood than those not exposed.

COPD is a progressive disease that produces large amounts of mucus, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness and other symptoms. It is caused by smoking, exposure to smoke, dust, chemicals and air pollution.

The study, published in the journal *Respirology*, was conducted by researchers in Norway between 2006 and 2009. It found that women were more at risk of developing COPD — a 1.9-fold greater risk — than women who hadn't been exposed to passive smoke. Men exposed to tobacco smoke had a 1.5 to 1.7-fold greater risk.

The study's publication coincides with a new report from the Conference Board of Canada that predicts the economic burden of three chronic lung diseases will be \$24.1 billion in the year 2030. The three diseases are lung cancer, asthma and COPD. In 2010, the burden of these diseases was estimated at \$12 billion, which includes costs for drugs and doctors, as well as indirect costs such as disability and premature death.

### [Lung Disease Linked to Kids' 2<sup>nd</sup>-Hand Smoke Exposure](#)

To read the Abstract:

[Association of exposure to environmental tobacco smoke in childhood with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and respiratory symptoms in adults](#)

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**[Next Newsletter: Friday, April 6, 2012](#)**



## Toxic Clean-Up Group Honors Charlotte Leslie

A Fairfield woman who played a key role in getting the old McKinley School demolished because of mold and air-quality problems was honored in Boston recently by a group that advocates for the cleanup of toxins.

Charlotte Leslie, head of the old school's PTA when it was shut down in 2000, was honored by the Hartford-based Toxin Action Center. She was named from among more than 100 nominees for one of the group's 25 Years of Victories Awards, the center said in a news release.

The awards recognized individuals for their leadership in cleaning up hazardous materials and protecting the health of their communities over the past quarter century. With pervasive mold problems, the old McKinley School was razed in 2000 and a new school was built on the Thompson Street site.

Leslie also was a founding member in 2002 of the Canary Committee, now known as CT Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools or ConnFESS, the Toxin Action Center said. The group lobbied successfully for the Connecticut Legislature's 2003 adoption of indoor air-quality legislation.

### [Toxic Clean-Up Group Honors Fairfielder](#)

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## Quick Links:

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

**Store:** <http://cafepress.com/globalindoorhealthnetwork>

**Donate:**  
<http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/donate.html>

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