

GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS
IN OUR HOMES, SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES



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California Appeals Court Upholds \$5.8 Million Judgment in Asbestos Case

A California appeals court has upheld a nearly \$6 million judgment for the family of a man who died of asbestos-related cancer. The jury found the mesothelioma contracted by Phillips was caused in part by exposure to asbestos contained in Bendix-brand brakes. To read the article, click [here](#).

Climate Change is Making Us Sick -- Report from 400,000 U.S. Doctors

From increases in deadly diseases to choking air pollution and onslaughts of violent weather, man-made climate change is making Americans sicker, according to a report released Wednesday by 11 of the nation's top medical societies.

The [report](#) was prepared by the Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health, a new group that represents more than 400,000 doctors, who make up more than half of all U.S. physicians.

"Doctors in every part of our country see that climate change is making Americans sicker," said Mona Sarfaty, the director of the new consortium and a professor at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.

The burning of fossil fuels — gas, oil and coal — to power our world releases greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane into the Earth's atmosphere, warming the planet to levels that cannot be explained by natural climate cycles.

Scientists have warned for years of the potential impacts of climate change on human health. The federal National Climate Assessment released in 2014 said: "Climate change threatens human health and well-being in many ways, including impacts from increased extreme weather events, wildfire, decreased air quality, and illnesses transmitted by food, water and diseases carriers such as mosquitoes and ticks."

And the World Health Organization estimated climate change will be responsible for about 240,000 deaths per year by 2030.

To read the article, click [here](#).

See *NYCHA Announced a New Program* page 2

NYCHA Announced a New Program to Combat Mold Problems (New York)

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) announced the launch of a pilot program to abate pervasive mold from its aging buildings. Under the program — dubbed Mold Busters — workers will be equipped with special meters to monitor moisture in apartments and accurately target the cause of the mold.

The anti-mold program comes as a judge has extended the court oversight of NYCHA for another year, the Daily News has learned. In December 2013, NYCHA settled a class action suit by promising to address allegations that its failure to eradicate mold was harming tenants who have asthma and other respiratory ailments.

Since then, the agency has failed to turn things around, and a federal judge last year brought in a special master to speed up the process. That oversight was set to end this week. But last month, Manhattan Federal Judge William Pauley agreed to extend court monitoring into April 2018 after NYCHA and the special master came up with the tougher anti-mold campaign.

Since the consent decree was first signed, NYCHA workers have tried to address mold complaints, but often they don't address a common source of the problem — water behind the wall, tenants say.

When leaky pipes are found and repaired, staff will wrap them with insulation to reduce the risk of renewed moisture, use mold-killing paint on walls and address ventilation issues in bathrooms.

The new program kicks off May 1 but only targets 38 of NYCHA's 328 developments. Metro Industrial Area Foundation, the community group that sued NYCHA to address this problem, described the new program as better-late-than-never.

"We hope that it works," said the Rev. Getulio Cruz, pastor of Monte Sion Christian Church, and a Metro IAF leader. "However, this comes after decades of neglect by NYCHA and almost three years after they agreed in federal court to really address mold."

To read the article, click [here](#).



HUD Planning to Relocate 185 Families Due to Poor Heating and Mold (Illinois)

Federal housing officials say they plan to relocate 185 families from two southern Illinois public housing developments that have been plagued by problems, including poor heating and mold.

The Southern Illinoisan reports that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development said it would provide residents with vouchers and fund their moving expenses.

However, options for housing in Cairo are limited and there are no plans for new public housing, which was among the frustrations of residents who attended a Monday evening community meeting.

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HUD officials say they'll start moving people in May.

Federal officials took over the local housing authority last year, citing years of mismanagement and discriminatory practices by local managers. Several lawsuits have been filed.

Elected officials have pledged to support Cairo residents.

To read the article, click [here](#).

Phosphine Gas Caused Death of Four Children (Texas)

Autopsy reports on the four Balderas children who died in an accidental pesticide poisoning in January confirm they died of acute aluminum phosphide exposure and pulmonary edema, according to documents released on Wednesday by Judge Gary L. Jackson.

All four reports for the Balderas children — Yasmeen, 17; Josue, 11; Johnnie, 9; and Felipe, 7 — cited the two conditions as the main cause or the contributing cause for their deaths.

“The residence had a large quantity of aluminum phosphide pellets placed beneath it,” the cover sheet on each of the four reports stated.

“The ambient humidity released enough phosphine gas to make family members feel ill. Later, when an attempt was made to wash away the pellets, a large amount of phosphine gas was released making this child and others critically ill.”

The reports also reveal that it was Felipe who was found dead at the house at 1301 Carolyn St. when first responders arrived at the scene around 5 a.m. on Jan. 2, while the other three died later that morning at Baptist St. Anthony Hospital.

Investigators quickly learned that what was first thought to be a case of carbon monoxide poisoning was instead a case of chemical poisoning caused by a highly-volatile pesticide.

According to police the family’s father, Peter Balderas, said he spread Weevil-Cide — a heavily regulated commercial-grade pesticide — underneath the family home and then later tried to rinse it away with water, which created the deadly gas.

The family’s father and the four surviving children remained at BSA for five days before being released while the mother, Martha Balderas, was transported to Lubbock’s UMC where she remained in intensive care for more than a week.

To read the article, click [here](#).



Families Fear Pesticide Poisoning after White House Reverses Ban

A white cloud of pesticides had drifted into Fidelia Morales’s back yard, coating her children’s swing set.

The 40-year-old mother of five gestured toward the citrus groves that surround her house in California’s Central Valley as she recounted when an air blast sprayer sent chemicals floating onto her property last year – landing on her family’s red and blue jungle gym.

“We know this is dangerous for the kids, but what are we supposed to do?” she said on a recent afternoon, speaking in Spanish through a translator. Morales said she fears that these kinds of drifts, as well as long-term exposure to a variety of chemicals in the air, have hurt her children, ages 9 to 20, who have struggled to focus in school and have suffered from bronchitis, asthma and other chronic illnesses.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had previously proposed an agricultural ban on chlorpyrifos, one pesticide widely used in her region, based on the growing body of research documenting the risks for farm workers and communities, including links to brain damage in children. [Chlorpyrifos was banned for residential use in 2000.]

The Trump administration has rejected the science, announcing a reversal of the ban. Under the new policy, the EPA won’t have to re-evaluate health risks of the chemical for another five years and its use will continue.

To read the article, click [here](#).

See *Mold Growing on Ceilings and Walls* on page 4

Mold Growing on Ceilings and Walls (Florida)

A week after Louissita Chery brought her newborn baby home, he started to have trouble breathing. She rushed him to the hospital where he would remain for a month with respiratory problems.

Over the next several months, her other son experienced an uptick in asthma attacks, each one more severe than the one before. One of her daughters also complained she had trouble breathing.

Chery, a single mom of seven, believes the culprit behind her kids getting sick was the black mold-like substance growing on the ceilings and walls of her Gwen Cherry apartment where she lived for just under two years. The public housing site is owned by Miami-Dade County.

"I didn't want to complain so much because I didn't want to get kicked out," she said.

Mold is not uncommon in public and private housing throughout South Florida, but for low income renters who can't afford to move out or wage costly court battles against their landlords to fix the problem, that could mean living with the fungus, sometime for years.

After visits to emergency rooms and doctors' offices, Chery started to complain more. She said she'd speak to her site manager about the issue, but received no relief.

This past December, after threatening to call the media to broadcast her apartment's conditions, Chery said her family was moved temporarily to a hotel by the county for three weeks. Then the county paid movers to relocate her family to the Liberty Square housing project.

Dr. Michelle Kirwan, a pediatrician with the Institute for Child & Family Health in Miami Gardens, said that she sees many patients, mostly women with children, who live in subsidized or public housing and have health problems due to mold exposure. She calls it a public health concern.



Mold growing on ceilings and walls
(stock photo used for illustration)

Mold Growing on Ceilings and Walls (Florida)--continued

"This is something that needs to be addressed," said Kirwan. "People feel like they're in silos and it's just them that it's happening to, but I've seen this in many patients. It's just the real devastating stories are the ones where they can't get out."

Berniece Sanders, 21, lives directly upstairs from where Chery lived with her children.

Sanders said that her bathroom would constantly leak, dripping into Chery's downstairs apartment. She pointed to what appeared to be mold growing on her bathroom ceiling and walls. She said though she uses bleach and water to clean up the dark splotches several times a week, "It always comes back."

One of the barriers to addressing tenants' concerns about mold in public housing is communication, said Nejla Calvo, an attorney with Legal Services of Greater Miami.

"Tenants might walk into the site manager's office and say, 'I have mold in my unit. Please send somebody.' If they don't put it in writing it's very hard to track that," said Calvo.

"I had a woman who has serious health conditions including respiratory illness. Her bedroom wall was completely covered in mold," said Calvo. "Her site manager completely denied there was mold there."

To read the article, click [here](#).

See *We can't bring our baby home* on page 5

We Can't Bring Our Baby Home as Mould Could Kill Him (U.K.)

A family that is unable to bring their baby home from hospital as the damp in their house could kill him have called for something to be done about the problem.

One-year-old Osian Jones suffers from leukaemia and would be at serious risk of catching a potentially fatal infection if he returned home to Toronnen in Bangor.

His parents say something must be done about the damp and black mould in his bedroom and the rest of their house.

Following numerous tests, including at Alder Hey in Liverpool, Osian was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia this week, after suffering with a rash and constant bleeding from a cut on his head.

Osian is having chemotherapy at Alder Hey, but his parents had been told by doctors that he could come home on Monday.

However, he will now not be allowed back because of the damp covering the ceiling of the bedroom he shares with his parents.

Ann said: "Mandy's been told he can't come home to the damp because it would kill him. His immune system is very, very low."

"It's been hard. We have been trying to get it sorted. We can't keep wiping it and painting because it keeps coming back."

"This has got to be done. People shouldn't have to live like this."

The damp in two of the house's three bedrooms and the bathroom has got worse, but nothing has been done by CCG, say the family.

Stephen said: "Every time we report it, there's no record. We've been told there's one inspector but that they can't do anything until May 2."

To read the article, click [here](#).



Mould in one of the bedrooms where one-year-old Osian Jones lives.

OSHA Finds Serious Mold Growth in Salem VA Hospital (Virginia)

The Salem VA Hospital has been cited for serious workplace violations in regards to mold. OSHA investigators discovered the problem in Building 75 and have given the hospital 30 days to correct the issue.

Two employees have reported health issues in regards to the mold, according to OSHA area director Stanley Dutko.

According to the citation, those could include allergic reactions, asthma attacks, and aggravation of existing health conditions.

OSHA said it has classified the mold growth as "serious" and said employees who feel the mold could affect them can request the hospital to accommodate them, either moving them to another workplace or immediately installing air filters.

"Our position is it was made aware of it some time ago and there should have been some action taken to fix the situation long before it got to the point that one of the employees had to file a complaint with federal OSHA," said Dutko.

To read the article, click [here](#).

OSHA said it has classified the mold growth as "serious" and said employees who feel the mold could affect them can request the hospital to accommodate them.

Elevated Carbon Dioxide Levels at Doherty High School (Massachusetts)

A month after the state health department's indoor air quality division reported finding elevated carbon dioxide levels at Burncoat High School, the division has again discovered similar conditions at Doherty High School.

The indoor air quality program, which the city earlier this year asked to test both high schools in response to concerns in the community that the buildings contained unsafe levels of polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, has posted the Doherty report on its Web page. The 39-page document says air quality testing conducted at the school last month determined carbon dioxide levels exceeded the health department's recommended levels in the "majority of areas surveyed the day of assessment, indicating a lack of fresh air exchange."

The report blames a general lack of ventilation for those conditions, indicating several classrooms had non-operating or blocked ventilators; blocked exhaust vents; or permanently sealed windows. It suggests fixing non-working equipment, opening up air ventilation passageways, and taking other steps to ensure fresh air is circulating in rooms throughout the school.

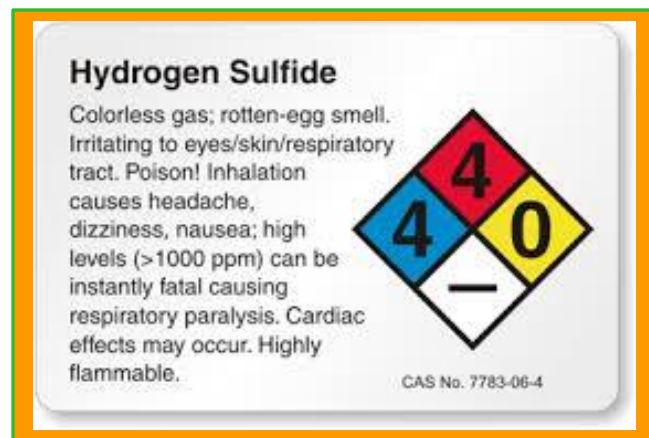
While high carbon dioxide levels on their own are not necessarily a hazard so long as they are not present in a confined space, they are indicative of inadequate air circulation, which can lead to "complaints such as respiratory, eye, nose and throat irritation, lethargy and headaches," according to the health department's Web site.

Aside from the carbon dioxide levels, the indoor air quality testers also found a few other areas of concern at Doherty, including water-damaged ceiling tiles.

The city's teachers union recently won a state labor relations case allowing it to conduct tests of its own at both schools.

School officials have said their ultimate objective is to replace Burncoat and Doherty.

To read the article, click [here](#).



What You Need to Know about Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S Gas)

Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S) is a gas commonly found during the drilling and production of crude oil and natural gas, plus in wastewater treatment and utility facilities and sewers. The gas is produced as a result of the microbial breakdown of organic materials in the absence of oxygen. Colorless, flammable, poisonous and corrosive, H₂S gas is noticeable by its rotten egg smell. With toxicity similar to carbon monoxide, which prevents cellular respiration, monitoring and early detection of H₂S could mean the difference between life and death.

Inhalation is the primary route of exposure to hydrogen sulfide. Though it may be easily smelled by some people at small concentrations, continuous exposure to even low levels of H₂S quickly deadens the sense of smell (olfactory desensitization). Exposure to high levels of the gas can deaden the sense of smell instantly.

H₂S does not accumulate in the body, but repeated or prolonged exposure to moderate levels can cause low blood pressure, headache, loss of appetite and weight loss. Prolonged exposure to low levels may cause painful skin rashes and irritated eyes. Repeated exposure over time to high levels of H₂S may cause convulsions, coma, brain and heart damage, even death.

Heavier than air, H₂S gas accumulates in low lying areas of poorly ventilated spaces. Hydrogen sulfide is a fast acting poison, impacting many systems within the body. Those exposed to H₂S gas should remove themselves from the toxic environment immediately.

To read the article, click [here](#).

See *Mould in Intensive Care Unit* on page 7

Mould in Intensive Care Unit (won't go away no matter how many times they clean it)

Shutting down an entire intensive care unit for the removal of mould is an almost unprecedented move.

Yet, when it emerged earlier this year that Ipswich Hospital had a mould problem that just wouldn't go away - no matter how many times they tried to clean it up - shutting down the ICU quickly became the only viable option.

The independent contractor engaged by West Moreton Hospital and Health Service carried out air quality testing and detected a concentration of mould spores of between 7-1767/m3 prior to the ICU being closed.

With very little to go by in the way of previous case studies, the staff set about putting together a plan in which they would relocate the hospital's most vulnerable patients, while they embarked on an operation to kill the source of the mould.

West Moreton Hospital and Health Service director of service support Richard Katt said hospital staff and contractors worked around the clock to ensure the ICU was fixed as quickly as possible.

The huge job involved dismantling the ceiling, carpets and sections of the air-conditioning system - which was ultimately pinpointed as the source of the mould outbreak.

In between dismantling and rebuilding the ICU, several rounds of mechanical and biological cleaning were carried out.

"It was a significant job from an infrastructure and clinical perspective in such a short period of time," Mr. Katt said.

"There were challenges in getting the resources we needed in such a short time, but we didn't hit any insurmountable road blocks along the way."

Patients had to be relocated from Ipswich ICU to other hospitals during the mould-cleaning and refitting of the hospital. A single-bed temporary ICU was established in the endoscopy section of the hospital to cater for those patients who required urgent care.



Mould in Intensive Care Unit (won't go away no matter how many times they clean it)—continued

West Moreton Hospital and Health Service executive director of medical services Pieter Pike said staff had to balance the risk of moving vulnerable patients versus the risk of exposure to the mould.

"There was no option to close down half the unit while we worked on the other part, because Ipswich is a small unit and it all relies on the one air-conditioning system," he said.

"We had to close down and I was impressed with what the clinical team came up with."

"The next problem was how we dealt with people who came in from emergencies like car accidents. With these cases, we felt we could deal with them the same way other hospitals without an ICU deal with it, and that is to get them to another hospital.

"For those patients who are already in the hospital and their condition deteriorates, we would set them up temporarily in the endoscopy unit."

The unit was cleaned several times during the dismantling and reconstruction process.

Mr. Katt said an initial mould reading taken at the end of the reconstruction showed levels were still above the target of 100 parts per cubic metre. An additional clean was carried out.

To read the article, click [here](#).

See *Dangers of Wireless Radiation* on page 8

Dangers of Wireless Radiation Addressed in Five Massachusetts Bills

Massachusetts legislators have introduced five bills this session to address public exposure to wireless radiation.

“Scientific literature has proven that exposure to wireless radiation is responsible for numerous medical symptoms and conditions,” said Lisa Lavine Nagy, M.D., government liaison for the Academy of Environmental Medicine.

A [landmark study](#) by the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) has proven that DNA damage as well as brain and heart tumors develop in mice exposed to cell phone radiation, she said. Other studies report lowered sperm count in men as well as damage to the fetal brain when a pregnant woman uses the cell phone.

Dr. Martha Herbert, specialist in pediatric neurology and a leading autism researcher at Harvard has observed links between wireless radiation exposure and autism.

An "Autism Innovations & Global Impact Conference," with "all the latest research on all aspects of detection, intervention and treatment," will take place April 28-29 at the Els Center of Excellence, Jupiter, Florida (www.elsforautismglobalconf.org).

Golfer Ernie Els, twice U.S. Open champion, and his wife Liezl started supporting autism research in 2008 when it was discovered that their five-year-old son, Ben, was afflicted.

One in 66 children now has the condition, says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The science documenting negative health effects of smart meters and Wi-Fi is also emerging, said a statement by Cecelia Doucette, radiation health activist.

“Many people are already experiencing radiation related symptoms in schools, homes, and workplaces,” she said. “Effects can include insomnia, headaches, fast heartbeat, dysautonomia, anxiety, tinnitus (ringing in the ears), tingling, nausea, skin rashes, cognitive impairment, depression, and behavioral issues. Non-industry funded scientists indicate children and fetuses are especially vulnerable.”



Dangers of Wireless Radiation Addressed in Five Massachusetts Bills (continued)

Doucette quoted Dr. Nagy as saying, “We must apply the precautionary principle and protect the public from potential harm with safe practices. These practices should be based on new data as well as the health experiences of people worldwide who are using these technologies.”

Tobacco’s Negatives Ignored for Decades

As happened in the case of tobacco, EMFs (electromagnetic fields) are all too slowly being recognized as having negative health impacts, said Doucette. “The science on EMFs has existed for decades, and other countries have already established more protective radiation exposure limits. Many physicians in the United States are seeing patients every day with electrical intolerance induced by overexposure in their environment.”

The five Massachusetts bills were called the first steps in taking action and educating the public on responsible use of today’s technology. To read the article, click [here](#).

As a retired microwave weapons specialist said, “By 1971, we knew everything that needed to be known” about radio frequency radiation. [Go to the [1971 report](#) by the Naval Medical Research Institute]

To learn more, check out the following pages on GIHN’s website:

[EMF and RF Smart Meters](#)
[WiFi](#)
[Cell Phones](#)

See *Lung Microbiome: Key to Respiratory* on page 9

The Lung Microbiome: Key to Respiratory Ills

The word microbiome has become a catch term only in the past decade, but it refers to something as old as humanity itself: the diverse and unimaginably vast population of microorganisms that share our bodies.

These microbiota compose an ecosystem whose constituent cells and genes actually outnumber our own, and without which we would be unable to carry out many functions necessary for life.

Medicine has succeeded in mapping much of the gut microbiome, but only recently has advanced technology enabled researchers to identify and study the inhabitants of the human respiratory system and possibly use this information to diagnose and treat respiratory disease.

Recently, JAMA discussed this research and its potential clinical applications with 2 experts on the front lines. Here is a brief excerpt of the interview:

JAMA: For some time the focus has been on the gut microbiome. When did the realization hit that the lung microbiome is a factor in respiratory pathology?

DR WHITE: It was thought some years back that the lung was a sterile organ and that normally there were hardly any bacteria in it, and that only when you have perturbations of the lung as in cystic fibrosis, emphysema, bronchiectasis, or pneumonia would the lungs become infected. More recently it's been recognized that the normal lung has its own microbiome. It's much smaller than the gut microbiome, but it's a unique microbiome that may influence health and disease.

JAMA: What respiratory diseases might be most amenable in the near future to treatment resulting from this new understanding? You mentioned asthma.

DR WHITE: **We've long thought that asthma is a disease of inflammation, but never understood what initiated it. More and more, we're understanding that certain bacteria, fungi, and viruses have a role.** And these [pathogens] can sustain the inflammation in adults. To read more of the interview, click [here](#).



Nevada PUC's Office Building Reported to USGBC for Ongoing IAQ Problems (Nevada)

Nevada's Public Utilities Commission (PUC) leases the entire second floor of a three-story Las Vegas building. This building was certified by LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) in May of 2010. The PUC was the initial tenant for the second floor.

The lack of attention to ongoing building water leaks resulted in a request submitted to the United States Green Building Council for review regarding the building's LEED Certification, on April 11, 2017. The request asked that LEED either remove the certification until this issue is properly addressed or permanently remove them from LEED's certification listing.

The Council received videos confirming the water allegations along with notifications to the PUC regarding this problem.

This building has come under scrutiny for ongoing water damage since October of 2012. While the public was being told the "water" issue was resolved, the same problem was noted again in March 2017.

Since 2012, the PUC has been spraying either Lysol or an air freshener. When asked why, reception-area employees stated that the room had a musty odor. These sprays can still be found in the PUC's reception area.

[NOTE: A few days after this press release was issued, the LEED medallion was removed from the lobby of the building.]

To read the article, click [here](#).

See *9th Circuit Pierces Privileges* on page 10

9th Circuit Pierces Privileges in Bad Faith Insurance Dispute

A federal court decision out of the District of Washington highlights the potential pitfalls of discovery against insurers related to bad faith claims and claims administration.

In *Hopkins v. State Farm Mutual Auto. Ins. Co.*, 2016 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 169591 (W.D. Wa. Dec. 6, 2016), the plaintiff was injured in an automobile accident with the defendant's insured in 2011.

The plaintiff requested documents related to the insurer's claims processing in discovery. The insurer declined to produce an internal report and related documents because they were ostensibly made in response to the "threat of bad faith litigation" and were, therefore, protected work product generated in anticipation of litigation. The plaintiff moved to compel.

The court granted the plaintiff's motion and ordered the production of all claims-related documents produced prior to the defendant's payment of the \$25,000. The court disagreed with the insurer's contention that the report was made in anticipation of a possible bad faith lawsuit, finding instead that the reason the report had been generated was because the claim was still open more than four years from the date of the accident.

The court concluded: "To hold that an insurance company's work product is protected because there is a possibility of a bad faith lawsuit, especially prior to the claim being settled, creates a perverse incentive for insurance companies to act in bad faith. An insurance company cannot create the necessity of a bad faith lawsuit, and then protect itself from discovery by claiming the prospect of bad faith litigation."

The court also held that communications and work product regarding a reservation of rights letter drafted by the insurer's legal counsel "relates to claims administration" and, consequently, was "not protected from discovery."

To read the article, click [here](#).

The court concluded: "To hold that an insurance company's work product is protected because there is a possibility of a bad faith lawsuit, especially prior to the claim being settled, creates a perverse incentive for insurance companies to act in bad faith. An insurance company cannot create the necessity of a bad faith lawsuit, and then protect itself from discovery by claiming the prospect of bad faith litigation."

Mold Problems Again in South Carolina Courthouse

Officials say mold has once again been discovered in the Spartanburg County courthouse, forcing more office closures and relocations.

Clerk of Court Hope Blackley tells the Herald-Journal of Spartanburg in an email that an air quality report found five areas in the courthouse had elevated levels of mold and mold spores.

The 60-year-old courthouse was closed at times last year because of mold.

The Spartanburg County Council is considering a new judicial center and city-county government complex that would cost almost \$217 million.

Officials say it's needed in part because of persistent mold problems.

To read the article, click [here](#).

Quick Links:

Website: <https://www.globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

Health Effects:

<https://www.globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/health-effects>

Commemorative newsletter for Dr. Jack Thrasher:

<https://www.globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/2017-newsletters>