

# GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

"WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS"

<http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

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## GIHN Announcements

Check out these updates regarding the Global Indoor Health Network.

### Twitter

The Global Indoor Health Network is now on Twitter.

### **@GlobalIHN**

### GIHN's Position Statement

The Global Indoor Health Network's new position statement has been distributed to thousands of individuals and organizations around the world including major media outlets, elected officials, medical organizations, schools, state departments of health, state education departments and many more. The paper is receiving a lot of attention, and it was recently announced on the Environmental Protection organization's [website](#).

## University of Victoria told to Address Workers' Chronic Health Problems Linked to Sick Building

Since 2000, many University of Victoria employees (the school won't say exactly how many) have filed complaints about health concerns developed while working in Sedgewick.

A critical report from WorkSafeBC, released April 17, says the university has failed to protect the health and safety of its employees under the Workers Compensation Act (WCA) after high levels of mould and carbon dioxide were found in the Sedgewick building in late 2009.

"The employer has been receiving these complaints for a number of years, and, to date, has failed to fully investigate the known and unknown airborne contaminants," wrote WorkSafeBC prevention officer Dawn Ianson.

CO2 levels inside were elevated – possibly due to turning off the building's HVAC system, which pumps stale air out and fresh air in. It was permanently shut down in 1998. **Mould spore counts were 31 times higher inside Sedgewick than outside.**

Ianson issued four orders that the university must comply with by May 31.

The orders require UVic to ensure its workers' safety by correcting the issues related to health and wellness complaints from Sedgewick employees. The university must conduct airborne sampling and produce a report with findings when complaints are lodged. It also must improve the reporting system for health and safety issues to ensure each one is investigated and addressed. Finally, UVic needs to tell WorkSafeBC what steps were taken to correct the WCA contraventions.

[University of Victoria Told to Address Workers Chronic Health Problems Linked to Sick Building](#)

See *Mold to Blame for Mystery Illness* on page 2

## Mold to Blame for Mystery Illness

Doctors were perplexed when a healthy young woman from South Jersey developed a bizarre illness. Ordinary household odors make her so sick that she is living in a tent in her parent's backyard.

A doctor in Texas may have unraveled the mystery, reported Fox29's Robin Taylor.

Over the past four years, Jennifer Parker's world has changed dramatically. She went from running her own successful landscaping business to living in a tent in her parent's backyard.

"When I go indoors or in a car or in any stores, I get sick," said Parker, 31, who wears an air mask and is treated with oxygen.

The mysterious illness left doctors puzzled. Her symptoms ranged from nausea and fatigue to memory loss and then this bizarre one, pink fingerprints.

"There was a time when every white surface I would touch would turn pink," said Parker.

At one point, Jennifer ended up in the hospital with convulsions.

Mary Ann has tried relentlessly to find out what's wrong with her daughter and may have finally gotten an answer. Tests showed Jennifer's townhouse was filled with deadly mold.

"I didn't know that the mold was growing in my home because I couldn't see it. It was up in the attic," said Jennifer.

A doctor in Texas made the diagnosis. He says the pink fingerprints were her body's way of trying to rid the toxins.

The illness left Jennifer allergic to household chemicals in everything from upholstery to detergent. She can only eat organic food and takes a half-dozen vitamins.

"My immune system is so weakened from the mold that I'm forced to live out here. It's horrible."

[Mystery Illness Confines Woman to Tent](#)



*Jennifer Parker*

## Farmington Family Forced to Leave Moldy Apartment

A Four Corners family is speaking out after they said they were forced to leave their apartment because of mold.

Frank and Luz Delgado took video of mold in their apartment at the Ladera Village Apartments in Farmington (New Mexico) a month ago.

Friday they brought us back to the apartment. Not much has changed.

"They've never hired anyone to clean it and they've never given us a day that they're going to clean it," said Frank Delgado.

The complex offered to let them stay in their clubhouse but the family said everyone has a key to that building.

They also offered to let them move into an empty apartment, but the family decided not to because employees couldn't guarantee there wouldn't be mold in the building.

So for now the family of six lives in a spare bedroom at a family member's place.

"It's been really hard on me and my family and it's not fair. I feel like I've been mistreated," said Luz Delgado. But that's not all. "We're not the only ones dealing with it here," said Frank.

[Farmington Family Forced to Leave Moldy Apartment](#)

See *EWG—Provides List of Toxic Cleaners* on page 3

## Environmental Working Group Provides List of Toxic Cleaners

In a ground-breaking initiative to uncover the truth about toxic chemicals in common household products, the Environmental Working Group has unearthed compelling evidence that hundreds of cleaners, even some of those hyped as “green” or “natural,” can inflict serious harm on unwary users. Many present severe risks to children who may ingest or spill them or breathe their fumes.

The first edition of the EWG Cleaners Database is due for release in fall 2012. Already, our research has turned up products loaded with extremely toxic compounds banned in some countries. Some of their ingredients are known to cause cancer, blindness, asthma and other serious conditions. Others are greenwashed, meaning that they are not, as their ad hype claims, environmentally benign. Still more hide the facts about their formulations behind vague terms like “fragrance.”

Though many Americans assume government bodies oversee the safety of the multi-billion-dollar household cleaning products industry, it is largely unregulated.

Here are a few excerpts from the report:

### Greenwashing

Cleaners labeled “safe,” “non-toxic” and “green” can contain hazardous ingredients. There should be a law against bogus claims, but there isn’t. Some companies are willing to bend the truth—because they can.

**EWG Green Tip:** Read labels carefully and pay special attention to warnings. Don’t buy any products labeled “poison,” “danger” or “fatal” if swallowed or inhaled.

### Banned Abroad

The report lists some of the products that are banned abroad due to their dangerous ingredients. For example, one of the products listed is Spic and Span Multi-Surface and Floor Cleaner which contains nonylphenol ethoxylate (which breaks down to nonylphenol). It can disrupt the hormone system, is toxic to aquatic life and persists in the environment. Other harmful chemicals included in the list of banned ingredients are DEGBE, 2-butoxyethanol and DEGME.



## Environmental Working Group Provides List of Toxic Cleaners (continued)

**EWG Green Tip:** Check your brands’ labels and websites for ingredient lists. Avoid products containing nonylphenol ethoxylates (look for “nonylphen” or “nonoxynol” within the ingredient name) and 2-butoxyethanol, butoxydiglycol, ethylene- or diethylene glycol monobutyl ether, diethylene glycol monomethyl ether or methoxydiglycol.

### Drain cleaners that can burn and blind

Childproof packaging is just one clue that conventional drain cleaners are extremely dangerous, such as Drano Professional Strength Kitchen Crystals Clog Remover. The label says this product can severely burn eyes and skin and cause blindness or even death.

### Oven cleaners that emit toxic fumes

Conventional oven cleaners can contain substantial amounts of sodium or potassium hydroxide, meant to dissolve crusty, baked-on gunk. These chemicals can also burn skin, lungs and eyes.

**EWG Green Tip:** Sprinkle baking soda liberally to cover the bottom of the oven. Spray with water. Wait 8 hours, scrape and wipe clean.

### Combatting static with toxic chemicals

Dryer sheets and anti-static sprays may free clinging fabrics and stop static sparks, but they usually do it with quaternary ammonium compounds that can irritate lungs and cause asthma as well as allergic contact dermatitis.

To read the entire report:

[EWG Cleaners Database 2012—Hall of Shame](#)

See *Member Profile: Andrew Cutz* on page 4

## Member Profile: Andrew Cutz

Andrew Cutz is a **Certified Industrial Hygienist** (American Board of Industrial Hygiene) with 25 years of progressive experience. He completed his Bachelor of Science degree in Health Sciences at the University of Toronto with a subsequent post-graduate Diploma in Industrial Health from the University of Toronto's Occupational and Environmental Health Unit.

Andrew worked as an Environmental Project Coordinator at the **University of Toronto** and then joined the **Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety** (CCOHS) in Hamilton, Ontario, where he was Project Officer in the Physical Agents Group for five years. Later, he worked with the **Ontario Ministry of Labour** as their Occupational Hygiene Consultant for North Eastern Ontario for seven years.

Andrew also worked for the **MFL Occupational Health Centre, Inc.** in Winnipeg, Manitoba, for two years where he provided authoritative advice and training to various stakeholders throughout Manitoba, and he participated in a provincial regulatory review process. He also operated a private industrial hygiene consulting business for the last ten years and worked for environmental consulting companies (*Ontario Environmental & Safety Network, Ltd., T. Harris Environmental Management, Inc., AMEC NCL, ESSE Environmental Health, Inc.*) providing comprehensive and timely industrial hygiene services, and occupational health and safety training to institutional and corporate clients in the Greater Toronto Area and across the Ontario's Golden Horseshoe.

Andrew has gained comprehensive experience in *anticipating, recognizing, evaluating, controlling and managing* -- occupational and environmental chemical, physical and biological health hazards in a wide variety of industries including manufacturing, automotive products, forest products, pulp and paper, and inside healthcare, educational and nuclear power generation facilities.

Andrew has conducted a number of major building indoor environmental quality assessments and consultations for institutional and property management companies and tenants including removal of designated substances (e.g., asbestos-containing materials and lead paint) and water-damaged materials from large buildings and private residential homes...



## Member Profile: Andrew Cutz (continued)

under the strict property insurance coverage and liability.

Andrew taught environmental studies and occupational health and safety courses at Northern College in the Fall of 1997, and he has helped organize and participated in numerous seminars, video conferences, workshops and training sessions over the years. Recently, he helped develop and coordinate an extensive training program for the medical, technical and engineering staff at the Occupational Health and Safety Centre (İSGÜM) in Ankara, Turkey (see the [photo above](#)).

Andrew is a member of the American Academy of Industrial Hygiene, Occupational Hygiene Association of Ontario (OHAO) and the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), and he is a past chairman of the AIHA International Affairs Committee. Since 2006, he has been a member of the ASTM Subcommittee D22.08 on Sampling and Analysis of Mold. He recently joined the Canada Green Building Council and the U.S. Green Building Council and plans to write the LEED Professional Accreditation examination with the U.S. Green Building Certification Institute in Washington, DC.

Andrew is married to Julitta Cox, and has twin sons Patrick and Jonathon, now 23, from an earlier relationship. He has continued to enjoy and practice tai chi over the last twelve years, and he earnestly moderates *GlobalOccHyg List* and *Flood Relief Aid List* as some of his social media outlets. In 2008, he received the *AIHA Outstanding Service Award* for moderating online groups and social media but friends and colleagues nicknamed him the "e-Being" years ago.

See *Ob-Gyns (environmental chemicals)* on page 5



## Ob-Gyns Can Prevent Negative Health Impacts of Environmental Chemicals

Ob-gyns are uniquely positioned to play a major role in reducing the effects of toxic chemicals on women and babies, according to an analysis led by University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) researchers.

The team recommends a multipronged approach that includes evaluating patients' environmental exposures to chemicals and providing education, in addition to broader strategies to influence government policy.

Over the past 70 years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of natural and synthetic chemicals to which every person is exposed. A recent UCSF study showed that the bodies of virtually all U.S. pregnant women carry multiple chemicals, including some banned since the 1970s and others used in common products such as non-stick cookware, processed foods and personal care products.

At the same time, rapidly accumulating evidence shows that exposure to environmental chemicals at levels common in daily life can adversely impact reproductive and developmental health.

"Exposures to environmental chemicals before and during pregnancy are of particular concern, since we now know that encountering certain chemicals during these developmental periods is linked to a number of health problems," said senior author Linda C. Giudice, MD, PhD, professor and chair of the UCSF Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences.

"Obstetricians, gynecologists and other reproductive health providers can play a groundbreaking role by intervening in critical stages of human development to translate the new science into healthier future generations," she said.

Taking an exposure history is a key first step. The human reproductive system is particularly vulnerable to biological changes caused by chemicals in the environment when exposures occur during critical or sensitive periods of development such as in utero, and during infancy, childhood and adolescence.

[Ob-Gyns Can Prevent Negative Health Impacts of Environmental Chemicals](#)



*Ob-Gyns need to include an environmental exposure history*

## Avondale Area Apartment Leaks When it Rains

Many people like to seek the shelter of their home when it rains, but for some residents of the Poinciana apartments in Avondale (Ohio) say the rain comes right through the ceiling and down their walls.

Adrian Kendall pieces of her ceiling fall every time it rains. The water causes mold which she says threatens her family's health. "Me and my kids' safety, they've been getting sick and everything a whole lot and they don't usually be getting sick and I think it has something to do with this apartment," said Kendall.

Lakeyda Woody lives in the apartment below Kendall and has standing water on her kitchen floor and mold growing inside her walls. "I have two children and we have chronic asthma and allergies, and we have real bad mold in here," said Woody.

Another neighbor, Tiffany James worries about water running into electrical outlets. "The fact that they're not even coming over here to stop it, put a plastic up, cover the wires, cut the electric, I mean you didn't bother to see, secure the electric off yourself, we did that on our own and we're like where's the help," said James.

A maintenance crew was sent over, but didn't offer much help. "It's raining inside this lady's house and the only thing they can tell us is wait till Monday, they didn't even try to help mop up," said Woody.

[Avondale Area Apartment Leaks When it Rains](#)

See *USC Asbestos Violations* on page 6

## USC Fined for Repeated Asbestos Violations

In the past four years, the University of South Carolina has paid \$175,500 in state fines for violating environmental laws that protect students and staff from asbestos, a building material that causes cancer and breathing disorders.

The violations include a series of broken promises in which USC told state regulators it would improve asbestos handling practices, but never did, records show.

USC's asbestos violations occurred during renovation or repair projects at three student apartment complexes, a medical school building and Williams-Brice Stadium in Columbia as well as at a building at USC's branch campus in Lancaster, according to state Department of Health and Environmental Control enforcement records.

USC's repeated failure to follow the rules represents a disturbing trend that needs to change, say those familiar with asbestos cleanup projects.

Large government agencies and universities should be well-versed in how their staffs or contractors should renovate buildings, experts and health protection advocates say. Asbestos regulations are intended to ensure the material is not dispersed into the air where people can breathe it in.

**"Without a doubt, the university should have the knowledge and capability of handling this properly,"** said Brent Kynoch, managing director of the nonprofit Environmental Information Association in Washington. **"The fact that they are not doing it is unexplainable, as far as I'm concerned. These are not new regulations. They've been on the books since the 1980s."**

[USC Fined for Repeated Asbestos Violations](#)

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**Next Newsletter: June 1, 2012**



## CNN Stories on Mold

Over the past few months, CNN has done news stories regarding mold in schools and military housing.

These news stories represent another good step toward raising awareness for this important public health issue.

**As we state in the [GIHN position statement](#):**

**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.**

To see the videos, go to these links:

[CNN Toxic Schools, Part I](#)

[CNN Toxic Schools, Part II](#)

[CNN Toxic Homefront \(Military Mold\), Part I](#)

[CNN Toxic Homefront \(Military Mold\), Part II](#)

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## Quick Links:

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

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

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

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

**Working Together for Healthy Indoor Environments**