

GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

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



May 1, 2015

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GIHN New Member

Ian Crump lives in Virginia. He is an Indoor Air Quality professional with multiple certifications. He is also the Owner and President of Advanta Clean in Fairfax, Virginia. Please join me in welcoming Ian.

Fungal Disease: The Trojan Horse that Threatens the World

The global organization, [GAFFI](#), is now calling on all policy makers and health agencies to wake up to the plight of more than 300 million people worldwide that suffer and die every year from fungal disease. GAFFI was set up in 2013 to highlight what doctors believe is a worldwide catastrophe that is growing year on year, but could be halted with local access to diagnostic tests, antifungal medicines and better medical training.

Fungal infections kill at least 1,350,000 patients with, cancer, TB, asthma, or following AIDS; as well as causing untold misery and blindness to tens of millions more worldwide.

“Fungal disease is the Trojan horse – the silent, unappreciated global catastrophe on a scale no one has grasped until recently. For example, after TB, as many as 20 per cent of patients develop lung fungal infection, (estimated burden 1.2 million worldwide) which slowly progresses to death over a five year period, unless arrested with treatment. Fungal meningitis and pneumonia kills in excess of 1 million patients with AIDS every year, including many children, this is before treatment for HIV can begin to work.

“Blindness caused by fungal infection of the eye affects over 1 million adults and children globally yet the tools are not available for rapid diagnosis and treatment for millions of people. Skin fungal infections affect a further billion people worldwide. Severe asthma with fungal allergy could account for half of the 350,000 deaths from asthma each year, yet it is treatable with antifungal drugs.”

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

See *Federal Courthouse in Florida* on page 2

Federal Courthouse in Florida Infested with Mold (Pensacola, Florida)

The federal courthouse in downtown Pensacola is dangerously infested with mold and in need of immediate repairs estimated at more than double the cost of its original construction.

Further, the mold threat could require all activities and personnel at the building at the corner of Palafox and Garden streets to be moved to temporary quarters elsewhere in Pensacola while repairs are made.

That's according to a letter The News Journal has obtained that was sent by U.S. District Judge Casey Rodgers to the General Services Administration, the federal office overseeing government facilities, outlining several structural and health concerns dating back to when the facility was built in 1997.

Rodgers wrote that any plan by GSA to perform the necessary repairs while the courthouse remains in use is unacceptable. She requested GSA carry out "a plan to relocate the building occupants to a courthouse facility suitable for our mission."

"Over 50 percent of the employees have reported symptoms consistent with mold and bacteria exposure: headaches and dizziness, nausea, aches and pains ...," Rodgers wrote. "Many of them have suffered these symptoms for years."

Rodgers said the areas troubled by mold include her chambers on the fifth floor, a jury deliberation room, the clerk's office and the U.S. Marshal's Service space.

She was in trial Wednesday and could not immediately be reached for comment, according to her aide.

"It's a tremendous concern," Miller said. "For the welfare of not only the individuals that go to the courthouse but certainly the people that work within the building."

Click [here](#) to read this article or click [here](#) to read another article regarding the mold problems at this courthouse titled "Mold May Force Court Moves."

Click [here](#) to read the Editorial about this situation.



Federal Courthouse Employees want out of Mold-Infested Building (Pensacola, Florida)

The federal agency in charge of managing the mold-plagued courthouse in downtown Pensacola has maintained it can eradicate the fungi without relocating personnel from the building, although a health report by a separate federal agency recommends otherwise.

Despite having sealed off several areas of the roughly 70,000 square-foot facility, including U.S. District Judge Casey Rodgers' chambers, the General Services Administration has said it doesn't believe conditions in the courthouse are unsafe. Meanwhile, many of the roughly 100 employees working in the courthouse continue to experience health concerns consistent with toxic mold exposure, according to Rodgers.

And although the full extent of the contamination isn't known, GSA has said it plans to perform those repairs without relocating courthouse personnel.

That's notwithstanding a 2012 National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health report which recommends relocating occupants before such work is done, especially if any have developed respiratory symptoms or disease that suggest dampness-related exposures, as is the case with the Pensacola courthouse.

"I don't like that we have employees, jurors, members of the public in the building," Rodgers said. "But I have no other options, we have to hold court. We have no ability to fix the problems or move out without GSA, and GSA is not listening to us when we say we need an alternate facility."

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

See *Officials Tour Moldy Courthouse* on page 3

Officials Tour Moldy Courthouse; Promise Reforms (Pensacola, Florida)

A high-level government official with direct oversight of federal facilities is promising to fix the moldy federal courthouse in downtown Pensacola, the victim of years of inadequate patch jobs.

Bill Shuster, chairman of the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, stood in front of the courthouse Tuesday morning alongside representatives Jeff Miller, Vern Buchanan and Chief Judge Casey Rodgers and called the General Service Administration's management of the federal facility "gross incompetence" and said he would seek to reform the agency this year.

"I'm glad I came down here because you see first-hand a situation that should have been dealt with years ago," Shuster said. "It's a situation that needs to be dealt with in an expedited fashion. I intend to go back with Jeff to Washington to figure out how we can deal with this and move this forward. ... We intend in this Congress to do a GSA reform bill, and this is another example of the GSA and the things they do wrong. There needs to be significant reform to the GSA, and that's something we'll be looking at."

Before addressing reporters, the congressmen and members of the media were led by Rodgers on a tour of the courthouse, including areas that had been sealed off to prevent the further spread of black mold that has long plagued the facility.

The group was taken onto the roof to see the bizarre drainage system that intentionally pools water there, to the U.S. Marshall's holding cells to see cracks in the floor and ceiling, and to Rodgers' former chambers where black mold discolored the floors.

Earlier this month, GSA finally began a search for 65,000 square feet of office space to relocate courthouse operations. Agreeing to move courthouse employees was a reversal of the GSA's earlier position to keep them in the building while renovations were made. No timetable yet exists for when that move might be made.

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



Insurance Industry Evaluating Costs and Risks of Climate Change

The following links provide important information about the insurance industry's focus on climate change.

[American Academy of Actuaries' report on Climate Change \(January 2015\)](#)

"Recent studies show that insurers are facing higher property and casualty insurance losses, which ultimately lead to higher costs to consumers and businesses."

[Academy Raises Awareness of Growing Climate- and Weather-Related Risks \(April 23, 2015\)](#)

"The Academy hopes to enhance understanding among policymakers and the public at large of the increasing risks from extreme weather incidents," said Shawna Ackerman, vice president of the Academy's Casualty Practice Council. "Our aim is to evaluate and help manage exposure to these risks from an insurance perspective. We do that by combining an objective perspective on what current climate science is telling us with our actuarial expertise."

[Climate change being measured in property damage, loss of life and costs in billions of dollars \(April 16, 2015\)](#)

[Presentation by Actuaries Climate Index Committee \(October 7, 2014\)](#)

[Determining the Impact of Climate Change on Insurance Risk and the Global Community \(November 2012\)](#)

Deadly Asbestos Hiding in 9 out of 10 British Schools (U.K.)

Almost nine out of 10 British school buildings harbour potentially deadly asbestos, but experts warn it would cost too much to remove it all.

Figures obtained from Freedom of Information requests to local authorities show 86 per cent of all schools in the country contain the killer dust, far higher than previous estimates.

But Professor Julian Peto, one of the country's leading experts on asbestos, said removing it all was not an option as it would "only save" around 25 lives a year in 50 years' time when effects of asbestos on pupils will take hold.

He said: "You cannot rebuild all the schools in Britain to prevent about 25 deaths a year.

"These are deaths that will occur predominantly over the age of 70.

"You have to remember that is the effect of childhood exposure."

However Michael Lees, 67, founder of the campaigning group Asbestos In Schools, who obtained the figures, argued: "We expose a large number of children to asbestos in schools and this is contributing to the terrible death toll.

"Successive governments brushed this under the carpet because the disease can take decades to develop."

Mr. Lees, a father of two, from Hardsworthy, north Devon, lost his wife Gina, a primary school teacher, in 2000 when she died aged 51 from mesothelioma.

Last week a review ordered compulsory asbestos training for teachers.

Mr. Lees said: "The review is a step in the right direction and future policy can be built on it, however it does not go far enough.

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



York Business Fined \$490,000 for Failing to Protect Workers during Asbestos Removal (Pennsylvania)

York City based First Capital Insulation, Inc. faces a \$490,000 penalty from OSHA for improperly protecting three of its workers from exposure to asbestos. OSHA issued a citation on Monday, April 20.

Regular exposure to asbestos can cause serious respiratory illness and several forms of cancer. OSHA inspectors say First Capital failed to properly protect the workers while they were removing thermal pipe insulation at an unoccupied home on N. 2nd Street in Harrisburg. OSHA began inspecting the work site in October 2014 until April 16, 2015.

First Capital was penalized for seven willful violations, including allowing workers to remove asbestos improperly, failing to make sure their employees' respirators fit correctly and not decontaminating employees and their clothing before leaving the work site.

The clothing of workers who handle asbestos creates a significant risk for secondary exposure. Its microscopic particles can easily attach to hair, skin and clothes. If the worker and his clothing are not properly cleaned before leaving the work site, others with whom the worker has contact risk secondary exposure. A worker who fails to change out of asbestos-contaminated clothing before returning home can leave fibers embedded in couches, chairs, carpets, beds and other furniture.

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

Pesticide Poisoned Family on Caribbean Vacation

The toxic pesticide that poisoned a U.S. family on vacation in the Virgin Islands has also been improperly used in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said Thursday after a federal investigation. Officials said documents suggest methyl bromide may have been improperly applied in various locations in Puerto Rico.

EPA regional administrator Judith Enck said the agency and Puerto Rico's Department of Agriculture are investigating where and when the pesticide was used and how much was applied.

'The EPA is taking this very seriously,' she said in a phone interview. 'I can't tell you how widespread this is... We're very early in our investigation.'

Enck said she is not aware of anyone sickened by methyl bromide in Puerto Rico. The EPA banned the chemical for residential use in 1984, primarily for health concerns.

The chemical sickened a family of four from Wilmington, Delaware, last month in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Two teenage boys went into comas after being exposed at the Sirenusa Condominium Resort in Cruz Bay, St. John.

The Esmond family was staying in the second floor of a unit whose first floor was sprayed with the pesticide to eradicate an indoor beetle that eats wood, officials have said.

Steve Esmond and his wife, Dr. Theresa Devine, and their two teenage sons fell seriously ill during their stay.

They began having seizures and were airlifted to separate hospitals in Philadelphia suffering major respiratory trauma. Sean, 16, and Ryan, 14, were in critical condition.

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



Two More Schools Sprayed with Dangerous Insecticide

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board said this morning that two more schools were sprayed with an insecticide that closed an elementary school earlier this month.

The Adult High School and Rideau High School were both sprayed earlier in the year to deal with cockroaches. There were no complaints of symptoms at Rideau, but two staff members made complaints after the spray was used in the cafeteria of the Adult High School.

Charles H. Hulse Public School was closed April 16 after a bad smell caused headaches, itching and watery eyes among some staff members and students. Classes have been relocated to the empty Parkwood Hills building.

"We are terribly sorry for any pain and suffering the situation has caused, we encourage families to make sure they are seeking medical attention for any children affected," said principal Vivian Petrie on Wednesday.

The board is currently working on compiling a list of other schools where insecticides have been used.

Etches said the insecticides had been used for years with no complaints, but Public Health does have guidelines that encourage the chemical used as a last resort.

Instead, schools are instructed first to deal with pests by removing food and debris, blocking entrances for insects and monitoring the situation before calling in a licensed pest removal company.

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

Duke University Oncologist Touts New Screening for Lung Cancer

Doctors are recommending a new type of lung-cancer screening for adults at high risk for the disease, which is the deadliest cancer in both men and women.

Earlier this year, Medicare began covering the screenings, which use low-dose CT scans instead of X-rays. A number of private insurers also cover the screening.

Currently, the annual screenings are recommended only for people considered to have a high risk of developing lung cancer, Stevenson said.

A person's risk level depends on age and a number of risk factors, namely the number of "pack years" a person has smoked in his or her life.

To determine pack years, multiply the number of packs of cigarettes smoked each day by the number of years smoked. For example, a person who smoked one pack a day for 30 years would have a history of 30 pack years, as would a person who smoked two packs a day for 15 years.

To be classified as high risk, a person must be age 55 or older, have smoked 30 or more pack years and have continued to smoke within the last 15 years.

Alternatively, a person age 50 or older with 20 pack years is considered high risk if he or she has one other risk factor. Those include family history; having other lung diseases such as COPD and pulmonary fibrosis; previous bouts with cancer; and exposure to diesel fumes, coal smoke, chromium, nickel, radon, asbestos, arsenic, silica, beryllium or cadmium.

Screening does not in any way replace the need to quit smoking, Stevenson said.

"If you're a current smoker and you start getting screened for lung cancer, that doesn't mean that you should just keep smoking," she said.

Note from the article: Medicare has data-collection requirements to become a registered screening site.

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



University of Iowa to Implement Ban on All Forms of Tobacco Products

Starting in the fall semester, the University of Iowa will become the first of the state's three public universities to ban all forms of tobacco on its campus.

Smoking cigarettes was outlawed at UI in conjunction with the state's Smoke Free Air Act in 2008, but e-cigarettes and other smokeless tobacco and nicotine products are not covered by the current policy.

Officials announced Tuesday that UI President Sally Mason and her Cabinet have approved expanding the smoke-free policy into a tobacco-free policy that would include electronic cigarettes; chewing or smokeless tobacco; snuff or snus; as well as pipes, hookahs (water pipes), bidis (small, thin, hand-rolled cigarettes) and kreteks (clove cigarettes).

UI's new policy will apply to students, faculty, staff and visitors. It includes all buildings, vehicles and outdoor areas owned, leased or controlled by UI. The use of e-cigarettes and smokeless tobacco already is prohibited in UI residence halls.

"It's a great move," said Doug Beardsley, director of the Johnson County Department of Public Health. "It shows they are committed to creating an environment of healthy living and healthy lifestyle on campus. This is what we've been looking for and encouraging."

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

Teachers, Students Say Jordan Elementary Mold Made Them Ill

Hospitalized children, and their parents, say it's because of what they're breathing at school.

Halle Wassenberg, 7, spent months seeing different doctors.

She's one of three students in the same classroom to leave Jordan Elementary School this year. Two teachers have also left. They all blame mold for making them sick. The school maintains the building is safe.

But a WCCO Investigation found mold concerns months ago were kept from parents.

Jordan Elementary pushed the start of school back a week in 2011 from a mold mess. A cooling unit wasn't working, and the fungus had sprouted on carpets and in air ducts. The school district spent at least \$200,000 cleaning it up.

A letter to staff from the superintendent said that the situation didn't warrant a letter to families.

Three months later, Halle's parents got a call from someone at the school.

They wanted to tell us about the mold, and they were told they absolutely could not, and if they did, they'd lose their jobs," Dabney Wassenberg said.

The Larsons removed their son, Joey, from that same classroom. A total of three students were now gone.

"I just thought my child was the only one who was sick," Mindy Larson said. "Apparently, he's not and there are teachers sick, too."

"Just to have her get repeatedly sick when there's a chance we could have known something before is really hard to stomach," Halle's dad said.

The two teachers to leave Jordan Elementary School have been denied workers compensation by the school district. They are going to appeal.

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



HUD Makes \$12 Million Available to Address Mold in Native American and Alaska Native Communities

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is making \$12.4 million available to help tribal communities remove and prevent - dangerous mold in homes. The grants are being made available through HUD's Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) Program, which addresses a wide variety of community development and affordable housing activities.

These grants will support mold remediation in housing units owned or operated by tribes, tribally designated housing entities (TDHE), or tribal organizations or housing that is currently or was previously assisted with HUD funding. Read [HUD's funding notice](#).

"No one should have to sacrifice the health of their children or themselves to keep a roof over their heads," said Lourdes Castro-Ramirez, HUD's Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing. "Through these mold remediation grants, HUD is ensuring that tribal communities have healthier and safer places to call home."

This source of grant funding was first used in Fiscal Year 2014 through a set-aside to remediate and prevent mold in housing units owned or operated by tribes and TDHEs. Last year nine tribes received grants to remove unhealthy levels of mold, including the Havasupai Tribe in Arizona where mold is a common problem due in part to frequent flooding in low-lying areas of the Grand Canyon.

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

See *Proposed Bill in California* on page 8

Proposed Bill in California Seeks to Shine Light on Chemicals in Cleaning Products

Half Moon Bay resident Marika Holmgren had no family history of breast cancer, so she was pretty surprised when she was diagnosed eight years ago, at the age of 37.

Holmgren, a longtime environmentalist, started looking into what could have caused her illness. The more she learned, the more she became alarmed about the potentially toxic chemicals in everyday products we all use, from makeup to household cleaners.

She's still not certain what caused her cancer — no one can say for sure. But Holmgren believes the public has a right to know what's in the things they buy, and she's wholeheartedly backing a proposed state law to require the manufacturers of cleaning products to disclose what's in them.

She hopes if AB708 becomes law, it won't just help consumers make better choices — it will also encourage manufacturers to create safer products.

"There are a lot of products that aren't labeled properly ... it's very hard to find the answers easily," she said, noting that many products simply list vague ingredients like "fragrance" that don't actually inform consumers.

"I think requiring companies to label ingredients is a very good first step that motivates them to be more transparent," she said. "If they have to be transparent, they may be compelled to use ingredients that may be safer, that aren't toxic."

Assemblyman Reginald Jones-Sawyer Sr. (D-Los Angeles), who is authoring the bill, noted in a written statement that low-income people who work as janitors and house cleaners — predominately immigrants and women of color — tend to have the most exposure to these chemicals.

Children are also at high risk: Last year, the state health department issued a warning about the links between asthma and cleaning products, and created [a program to help schools create safe cleaning programs](#).



Proposed Bill in California Seeks to Shine Light on Chemicals in Cleaning Products (cont'd)

Environmental health groups are backing the bill, including the Breast Cancer Fund and the Environmental Working Group.

"Ordinary people in office settings can be exposed and suffer adverse health effects," she said. "It's general consumers, moms and dads, kids living in homes — we are all exposed every single day and it's difficult to know what we are being exposed to."

She, like Holmgren, called labeling a good first step, saying advocates ultimately want to see federal reform to require safer products.

"In the meantime, unfortunately, it's really up to consumers to make the choices themselves, and to protect their own health," Sharp said. "How do you do that if you don't have simple information of what's in something on the label?"

California is also in the process of implementing a broader law that aims to push manufacturers to remove the most toxic chemicals from consumer products.

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

Click [here](#) to read a related article titled "Chemical Exposures Linked to Billions in Health Care Costs." This article was included in GIHN's newsletter last month.

Click [here](#) to read the Environmental Working Group's 2012 report titled "EWG Cleaners Database—Hall of Shame." It lists specific brands and products that are harmful.

See *Elderly Couple Living in Hotel* on page 9

Elderly Couple Living in Hotel for Three Months due to Mould Problem

An elderly couple have been living in a hotel for nearly three months after leaky pipes rotted their floors and left their housing association flat covered with mould.

Muriel Rivers and David Nice, both in their 70s, say they first reported problems with damp at their home in Springwell Road, Heston, to their landlord Places for People in May last year.

The damp was so severe it caused part of the floor to collapse, yet they say despite various visits from the housing association and its contractors only stopgap measures were taken for several months.

They were eventually moved into Hounslow Travelodge hotel on January 12 so extensive repair work could begin, but only after the problem had been left to escalate.

Nearly three months later they are still waiting to hear when they will be able to move back in or to another property, ideally on the ground floor.

They are also upset that their clothes, furniture and other possessions have been left at their home, where much of it has been covered with mould, rather than being moved into storage.

"There was water running down the walls of the bedroom when we were there, yet it took them more than six months to do anything," said Mr. Nice, age 75.

"We're still waiting to hear when we'll be able to move to another property. They're looking after us very well here but it's a long time to be living in a hotel."

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



New York Legislation about Radon in Natural Gas

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States and the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers, resulting in 21,000 lung cancer deaths every year.

Scientists at Johns Hopkins University recently reported that radon levels in Pennsylvania have risen since hydraulic fracturing of natural gas commenced. The researchers said they "found a statistically significant association between proximity to unconventional natural gas wells drilled in the Marcellus shale and first floor radon concentration in the summer," suggesting "a pathway through outdoor ambient air."

The Johns Hopkins finding renews concern about increased exposure to radon due to natural gas obtained through unconventional methods, including horizontal drilling and high volume hydraulic fracturing.

Under the proposal, natural gas that is not safe cannot be sold in New York. Allowing only the sale of radon-free or low-radon natural gas is a notion we can all live with.

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

Quick Links:

Website: <http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

Health Effects:
<http://www.globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/health-effects>

Position Statement:
<http://www.globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/GIHN-position-statement>

Next Newsletter: June 1, 2015