

GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

"WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS"

<http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

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GIHN Announcements

Please join me in welcoming our two new members.

Amy Charnay lives in Seabastol, California. She has a B.A. in Environmental Science and an M.S. in Herbal Medicine. She has biotoxin illness and chemical sensitivity. She is passionate about educating others on the subject of indoor environmental health.

Pati Tomsits lives in Irvine, California. She is ill because of mold. She is joining GIHN to help spread the word and to keep up to date on legal and medical developments in this field.

Making the Decision to Leave a Toxic Home—the Fabry family's decision

Be sure to check out the article on pages 4-5 about the Fabry family's decision to leave their toxic home. Chris Fabry shares his thought process when they had to make the decision to leave their home because of toxic mold.

Lead Poisoning Spurs Mother to Form Nonprofit

In 2009, Chalene Mudd's 1-year-old son, London, woke up in the middle of the night screaming, ran out in the hallway and started banging his head on the wall.

"It took me about an hour to calm him down. We went through months and months of him screaming and banging his head," she said. After seven or eight months, she found out he had lead poisoning from eating lead paint chips from the window sill in her remodeled Lorain home.

Mudd began to seek help for her son locally, but came up short. She had a breakthrough when she told her son's tale to President Barack Obama at the town hall meeting at Lorain County Community College in 2010. He arranged for representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to inspect her house.

She realized there was a void of resources in Lorain County so she started HuSu Inc., which stands for "help us save us," in March 2012. The nonprofit organization aims to educate and raise awareness about lead poisoning issues.

Lead poisoning can be contracted from paint, dust, pipes and several imported items such as candy or toys, Mudd said. She encourages consumers to check labels for products that are lead-free. She also advised checking for signs such as cracked paint. The health department can inspect a house for signs of lead hazards.

The symptoms of lead poisoning are similar to that of attention hyperactivity disorder such as behavioral or verbal issues, she said. It can even cause high blood pressure, numbness, muscular weakness or a lower IQ. It also can cause reproductive issues. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently lowered the standard for lead poisoning in children.

[Lead Poisoning Spurs Mother to Form Nonprofit](#)

See *Asbestos Makers Falsely Claim* on page 2

Asbestos Makers Falsely Claim Chrysotile Material Safe, WHO says

Certain business operators are denying the widely known fact that all forms of asbestos are dangerous, claiming chrysotile, or white asbestos, is safe, the World Health Organisation said.

WHO representative to Thailand Dr. Maureen E Birmingham said she has seen T-shirts espousing the safety of chrysotile and even falsely attributing the claim to the WHO. The T-shirts are being distributed by certain construction material producers which use chrysotile in their products. The designs on the shirts claim the WHO has certified chrysotile as safe.

"They are using the WHO's name in a misleading way," Dr. Birmingham said.

"The WHO has been very clear that all forms of asbestos, including chrysotile, can cause cancer," she said.

There is no known safe level of exposure to any form of asbestos. Dr. Birmingham said it was hard to prevent asbestos fibres from spreading and even a low level of exposure can cause cancer.

This has prompted the WHO and the International Labour Organisation to recommend that all asbestos use be stopped worldwide.

Asbestos is a mineral fibre, commonly used in building construction materials and products such as cement, roofing, water supply lines and fire blankets. It can also be found in automobile brakes and clutches.

Dr. Birmingham said about 107,000 people around the world die from asbestos-related diseases each year. Inhaling asbestos fibres can cause lung cancer or mesothelioma, a cancer of the lining of the chest and the abdominal cavity. There is also convincing evidence of asbestos exposure leading to laryngeal and ovarian cancer.

"It's like a ticking time bomb in Asia. We need to take action now," Dr. Birmingham said.

[Asbestos Makers Falsely Claims Material Safe](#)



WHO says all asbestos use must be stopped worldwide

Port Orchard Home Overrun with Fungus

A local family is scrambling after their dream house turned into a house of horrors.

Greg and his wife thought their Port Orchard waterfront home was a dream come true. They'd been living in the house for nearly six years when they decided to add on.

"That's when the mushrooms were discovered," Greg said.

The contractor they hired for the addition spotted the orange and yellow colored fungus on a baseboard.

Greg said he called the developer, who happens to live right next door.

"I said, 'Look, smell it, touch it.' He didn't want to do that," Greg said.

And it didn't stop there. They found huge mushrooms behind Greg's granddaughter's bed. After a contractor removed the drywall, Greg said there were mushrooms inside the studs all the way up to the door. Greg called his insurance company, but they said the fungus was a pre-existing condition and denied Greg's claim.

Greg had the fungus removed, but it continued to spread, and now he believes the wood used to build the home was infected.

Greg was diagnosed with bladder cancer, and he said he and his family plan to move out by the end of the month.

[Port Orchard Home Overrun with Fungus](#)

See *Toxic Effects of Flame Retardants* on page 3

Toxic Effects of Flame Retardants

In May 2012, a [remarkable investigative series](#) in the Chicago Tribune exposed decades of lies, coercion and influence peddling by flame retardant manufacturers. The report describes how a chemical industry front group paid a medical school professor to travel to Sacramento to testify on two separate occasions before the state legislature. This burn doctor described in vivid detail how he held in his hands a dying seven week old infant who was horribly burned when a pillow she was lying on burst into flames when a candle ignited it. He lectured lawmakers that the pillow was not chemically treated, and warned that changing the California regulation would only lead to more tragic deaths.

There was one problem with the doctor's heart-wrenching story - he made it up. Pressed by reporters, **the doctor admitted that his testimony was a work of fiction.** He said it was "an anecdotal story rather than anything I would say was absolutely true under oath, because I wasn't under oath."

For nearly four decades, chemical manufacturers have reaped billions in profits at our expense. Industry-funded front groups spent \$23 million in campaign contributions and political donations in California alone in the past five years - stopping five separate attempts to change this dangerous toxic regulation.

With the chemical industry's lies exposed, it is time to act. The federal Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) has [drafted a new standard](#) that would stop the spread of home fires without the use of toxic halogenated chemicals. Unfortunately, the chemical industry's corrosive influence peddling has also immobilized the administration. Four years after issuing the draft standard, the CPSC is frozen in inaction.

Manufacturers comply with (California) TB 117 by saturating upholstered furniture with toxic brominated or chlorinated chemicals. These chemicals are similar to TRIS, a fire retardant used in children's pajamas until it was eliminated in the US as a carcinogen in 1977.

These chemicals don't stay contained inside the furniture. They migrate into the dust in the air in our homes and from there into our bodies. Babies ingest the chemicals when they chew or suck on their bassinets and other furniture.



Toxic flame retardants are harmful to occupants and firefighters

Toxic Effects of Flame Retardants (cont'd)

Recent studies have found these chlorinated and brominated chemicals at extremely elevated rates in the blood streams of pregnant California women, and in the blood streams of California toddlers. In both cases concentration levels are many times higher than in studies conducted in Europe and other countries that have restricted their use.

Numerous scientific studies have linked halogenated fire retardant chemicals to learning disorders, decreased fertility, thyroid disorders and other harm. A recent UC Davis study demonstrated the threat these chemicals pose to children – including autism spectrum disorders and learning disabilities.

The evidence hasn't deterred toxics manufacturers from using every means available to preserve a chemical industry cash cow, TB 117. Toxics manufacturers stopped one bill from winning approval in the state legislature by flooding voters' mailboxes with industry-funded brochures.

These brochures forgot to mention that the California Professional Firefighters wants to get rid of TB 117. First responders bear the brunt of occupational exposure to dioxin and furan, which is released when furniture loaded with fire retardants smolder in a house fire. Dioxin and furan are linked to firefighters' elevated rates of multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, prostate and testicular cancer.

We are confident that if the state agency with the responsibility to keep us safe in our homes did its job, an objective, evidence based review will lead to the replacement of TB 117 with a non-toxic alternative. The first step is to free regulators from the heavy hand of the chemical industry.

[Take Toxics Out of Our Furniture](#)

See *Fabry family's decision* on page 4

Making the Decision to Leave a Toxic Home—the Fabry family's decision

A home is infested with toxic mold. Some, if not all, of the family members are ill. What happens when a husband and wife disagree over the appropriate course of action? Chris Fabry offers his perspective on this common scenario.

She's crazy. She's out of her mind with this mold thing. That's what I thought.

We've talked with many families going through a mold exposure. It's usually the husband who says this. Not always. Sometimes the husband sees it before the wife and rings the alarm. But we've found it's usually the man.

I thought my wife had gone off the deep end. Cyberchondria. She had found something on the Internet that fit with some symptoms and now she was suggesting radical treatment of the house and the children.

My first response was, "Wait, wait, hold on. Let's not jump off some cliff because there might be a problem. Let's move methodically. Slowly."

What I was really saying was, "Let's spend as little money as we can on this until you come to your senses."

My first inclination, the place I went when she brought up a problem with the house, was to PROVISION. I had worked hard for a lot of years to provide a nice home and a somewhat comfortable life. To spend money on mold, something we couldn't even see, made no sense.

But she saw. She saw each of our nine children falling like little soldiers. One had an eye disorder, another an inner ear problem, another constant throat and lung irritation, another a seizure disorder. The list went on and the list of doctors grew longer. Our pets were exhibiting problems.

This is just life, I told her. They're going to outgrow this. Just hang in there with them. Things will get better.

But they didn't. The kids got worse.



Chris and Andrea Fabry

Making the Decision to Leave a Toxic Home—the Fabry family's decision (cont'd)

In October 2008, my wife called while I was waiting for a flight home from Chicago. "I think we have to leave the house," she said.

"Listen," I said, trying to come up with some loving alternative to what was swirling in my gut. "We'll do whatever we need to do. Just wait till I get there."

That was the longest flight of my life, but it gave me a chance to think through the issues. If she is wrong about this, if she is deluded, crazy, or insane, I have much bigger problems than a house. But I'm committed to this woman no matter what. We'll get through this.

And then I allowed another thought to subtly slip through my mind. What if she's right?

I hadn't even considered this because my mind had gone to the COST of the house. But if she was right, the cost would be my children and their long-term health. Which do I care more about, my house and possessions or my children?

My children, of course! But then the other side of my brain kicked in—the provider. It makes no sense to flush everything we've done in the last eight years. And then I thought of all the furniture, new carpet, new appliances, yard work—my office! What about my office!? We put in a basketball court in the back yard. No, this can't be the way to go.

But what if . . . what if by some small, infinitesimal chance, we bought the one house that is infested with something we can't see that is slowly killing us? And what if the only way to free ourselves from further damage is to leave the house and everything in it?

Continued on the next page....

See *Fabry family's decision* on page 5

Making the Decision to Leave a Toxic Home—the Fabry family's decision

Continued from page 4...

The toxicologist and the doctor advising my wife, after hearing of the children's illnesses, told her to treat the house "like it was on fire." Run. Don't go back. Don't take anything with you.

But what about provision? Where do we go? What do we do? How do we pay for all of this, the testing, the possible remediation? Will the insurance company come through for us? What about a lawsuit?

Stop. Breathe.

This is all a bad dream. This is not happening to me. I've done everything I can to provide a safe place to live, a good life, and now it's being ripped away. She's crazy. That's it—she's just crazy and soon she'll come to her senses.

Or maybe I'll come to mine.

As long as I stayed in that "victim" mode, I was paralyzed. I cursed the home insurance company that told me our problem was not covered. I cursed the health insurance company that said the doctor who could finally help us was out of network and would not be covered. I cursed the company that first remediated the home and the hygienist who passed the inspection when the mold was larger after the remediation. I cursed the veterinarian who looked at our dog and said, "I've never seen this before."

Stop. Think about what's really going on here.

If this is all fiction and we leave, we can go back. The home will be exonerated and we can go back to our old life.

But . . . what if she's right?

If I could get out of victim mentality and stop making it about my wife, the doctors, the insurance companies, the remediators—if I can get past those issues to the heart of the matter, my deepest desire as a husband and father is to provide safety for my family.

Making the Decision to Leave a Toxic Home—the Fabry family's decision (cont'd)

If the house were on fire, I would run from room to room and carry my children outside. If they wanted to stay in the room or run back for their computers, I would continue to carry them to safety.

The most important thing in this equation is not the house, not our possessions, and not how much money we have in the bank. It's not what my wife feels or I feel. It's not what the insurance companies say or the lawyers say about the good chance we have for a lawsuit. None of that is paramount.

The most important thing is LIFE. Our lives. My children. My wife. Me. It's why I've worked so hard to provide—to give them life. And if the place where we're living is taking that life from us, it only makes sense to leave.

So on October 4, when I drove from the Denver airport, I put my suitcase with my new suit in the garage, changed clothes, and we walked out and closed the door behind us.

I was telling my wife with this act that I believed in her more than I believed in my own fear of the future. I believed in her more than I believed this was the wrong way to go. I was choosing life over the feeling of staying in the house another night.

For us, the story did not turn out to be fiction. The house was killing us. And it's been a long road to health since then. But here's what I tell any husband who calls me to complain about his crazy wife:

Your wife's heart is toward the children, toward life. Believe in her. You don't have to believe the mold is killing you. You can prove her wrong. But believe in her when she tells you it's time to vacate. And do it.

If she's wrong, you can both laugh at the inconvenience and the extra money spent. If she's right, it will be hard to forgive yourself for staying and putting your family at risk. Choose life. Choose people over things.

It's a choice you'll never regret.

See *Cleveland Family...Lead Poisoning* on page 6

Cleveland Family Struggles with Lead Poisoning

A Cleveland couple is calling for more lead testing, warnings, and abatement after 5 of their children are found to have elevated levels of the toxic element in their systems.

Ken and Angelina Shefton say they discovered that their Slavic Village neighborhood was located near a former lead smelter site, and moved from their home because of lead poisoning. They took part in a news conference at their old East 59th Street address.

The Shefton's feel homes should not even have been constructed on East 59th Street because of high lead levels. One of their sons can't speak, and other has been treated with shots to lower his lead levels. Three of their five children are receiving social security disability checks due to lead.

Dr. Karl Hess, a retired Shaker Heights pediatrician with an expertise in lead poisoning, claims the Centers of Disease Control is doing little to enforce lead guidelines, and feels the EPA has been lax in warning parents of the dangers.

U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown agrees and says he is working with other lawmakers to change that.

According to a series of USA Today reports, "tests...in neighborhoods near former lead factories showed dirt so contaminated that children shouldn't be playing in it. The soil tests revealed potentially dangerous lead levels in areas of all 21 neighborhoods examined in 13 states."

In Cleveland, soil testing found lead levels near a smelter site to exceed 3,400 ppm (parts per million). The average lead level in U.S. soils is just 19 ppm. Brown has also called on the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) to hold hearings regarding the former lead smelter sites.

[Cleveland Family Struggles with Lead Poisoning](#)

[Next Newsletter: July 1, 2012](#)



Contractor Blamed for Cypress Home Mold Infestation

A builder is being sued over claims it knowingly sold a defective home in Cypress. Kenneth and Christina Bohannon filed a lawsuit on Tuesday, May 22 in the Harris County District Court against KB Home Lone Star, citing negligence, violations of the Deceptive Trade Practices Act, breach of warranties and fraud.

The Bohannons say on April 8, 2006, they purchased a new Cypress-area home from KB Home Lone Star but quickly discovered water accumulating near the rear door. The defendant repaired the rear door seal, and it appeared the water leak stopped, according to the brief.

The suit alleges in 2010, the Bohannons discovered that continual water damage caused a mold infestation throughout the house and found it behind the cabinets and in the insulation.

When trying to resolve the issue, the Bohannons overheard the defendant say that the wood banding around the home was the real issue and that it knew it would be a problem for new homeowners, the petitioners claim.

[Contractor Blamed for Cypress Home Mold Infestation](#)

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