

# GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

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



June 1, 2019

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## Borderline Criminal: Many Public Schools Teeter on the Edge of Decrepitude

Each morning for several years, Keri Treadway switched the classroom lights on and stomped loudly to frighten away the mice. She checked the sticky traps. She swabbed tables with disinfectant wipes and cleared droppings from the colorful rug where her kindergarten students sat.

After the school day ended, Treadway rested her legs on a chair to avoid the scurrying rodents. The routine at William Fox Elementary School persisted until the 108-year-old brick building in the city's vibrant Fan neighborhood was visited by exterminators last year.

Treadway isn't familiar with much else. She has taught for 16 years in Richmond Public Schools, learning to adapt to deteriorating buildings. But she pauses when she hears from friends who teach elsewhere, in schools that are not rundown.

"You're like -- wait a minute, clearing up mouse droppings -- that's part of my daily routine," she said.

There are other routines teachers and students have ritualized to cope with building conditions in the 24,760-student school system.

They dress in layers, bundling up in heavy winter coats and scarves when classrooms become frigid, or peeling off sweaters when rooms are sweltering. They find ways to work around leaky roofs and falling ceiling tiles and mold, windows that don't open and restrooms without stall doors.

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Michael R. Gray, MD, MPH, CIME, was recognized at the ISEAI May 2019 conference for his pioneering work in Environmentally Acquired Illnesses. Check out his [videos](#) to learn more about his work.

See *Schools teeter on edge of decrepitude* on page 2

## Borderline Criminal: Many Public Schools Teeter on the Edge of Decrepitude (continued)

Continued from page 1...

The experience is familiar to schoolchildren in financially struggling districts throughout the country — from Baltimore to Detroit to rural Colorado — who are forced to contend with failing boilers and vermin.

**Substandard conditions can compromise students' attendance and performance, leading to absenteeism and lower achievement, studies show. Parents, students and teachers in some states have sued over neglected school buildings and inadequate resources, arguing, with mixed results, that poor conditions undermine students' ability to receive a public education.**

Some relief could come from the federal level: Congress is considering a plan to invest \$100 billion over a decade to rebuild public schools.

The investment is badly needed in broad swaths of the country. A 2014 federal study found that 53 percent of schools needed repairs, renovations or updates and that \$197 billion was needed to bring schools to "good overall condition." Other projections peg construction costs even higher, with the National Council on School Facilities estimating that public school buildings are in need of \$542 billion in upkeep.

The problem has forced some communities to seek creative solutions. Officials in Maryland's Prince George's County plan to use public-private partnerships to build and maintain several public schools in hopes of hastening construction and paring down an estimated \$8.5 billion maintenance and construction backlog.

In Virginia, the issue has resonated across geographic and political lines, unifying urban and rural school systems that have struggled to raise enough local dollars to compensate for what they describe as inadequate state support. But measures to infuse state coffers with money for school repairs failed to clear the General Assembly this year.

In Richmond, the city has reached its debt ceiling, meaning it cannot borrow money to pay for school construction, said Superintendent Jason Kamras.

Substandard conditions can compromise students' attendance and performance, leading to absenteeism and lower achievement, studies show. Parents, students and teachers in some states have sued over neglected school buildings and inadequate resources, arguing, with mixed results, that poor conditions undermine students' ability to receive a public education.

## Borderline Criminal: Many Public Schools Teeter on the Edge of Decrepitude (continued)

It would cost \$800 million to pay for all the construction needed in Richmond's public schools, according to the city.

The district approved \$150 million in school construction spending last year, most of which was earmarked to replace three schools.

But it could be decades before all 44 public schools in the city are rehabilitated or rebuilt, meaning at least another generation of students will sit in buildings that Kamras condemned as "borderline criminal."

### Inhumane conditions

"Students are forced to do work even in conditions where they can't really think or function as well as they could," Aghomo said. "It makes me feel like my education isn't valued as much as people from other counties and other schools."

At Binford Middle School, a long, commanding building that sits among rowhouses, the tall windows to Sarah Pedersen's first-floor classroom are sealed shut. Temperatures have risen to 95 degrees when the boiler runs too hot, she said, prompting her to turn on the air conditioner.

But the unit is so loud that she can run it only a few minutes before students complain of headaches and discomfort.

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See *Schools teeter on edge of decrepitude* on page 3

## Borderline Criminal: Many Public Schools Teeter on the Edge of Decrepitude (continued)

Continued from page 2...

"It's inhumane. These are inhumane conditions," said Pedersen, who noted that she hasn't had problems with her heating in recent months.

Classroom temperature, noise and cleanliness can have significant consequences for students' well-being, said Lorraine E. Maxwell, an environmental psychologist and associate professor at Cornell University.

Learning is affected not just by personal characteristics such as ethnicity, family income and individual potential, but also by "the multiple ways in which the school communicates that learning and achievement is possible and important," Maxwell wrote in a 2016 study of New York public schools.

Building conditions contribute to lower test scores, she said, even after considering other factors such as income. They also affect how students see themselves.

"Students, especially middle and high school, can understand that the building is saying something about how their education is valued," Maxwell said.

### Far-reaching problem

In a Northern Virginia elementary school cafeteria one November night, the chief operating officer for Alexandria City Public Schools stood in front of raucous parents fed up over mold and a leaky roof.

Rain damage had shuttered the auditorium earlier in the school year, and a month later, health department officials had warned that mold at Mount Vernon Community School could ignite respiratory problems in students with asthma or weakened immune systems.

Mignon Anthony, the school system's chief operating officer, told parents the district was doing all it could.

**"I've got 17 buildings in this city that all have mold, asbestos and lead in them," she told the parents.**

The U.S. federal government issued a 1995 report titled "School Facilities: Condition of America's Schools." It concluded that \$112 billion was needed to repair or upgrade schools throughout the country.

## Borderline Criminal: Many Public Schools Teeter on the Edge of Decrepitude (continued)

"And I'm going to do everything we can to make sure people aren't breathing it in and that the children are safe."

Similar problems have flared across the state (and throughout the country).

Concerns over school building conditions are long-standing. Former governor Robert F. McDonnell (R) ordered a building inventory of Virginia's public schools. The state determined in 2013 that more than 60 percent of schools were at least 40 years old and that it would cost more than \$18 billion to complete renovations for Virginia schools more than 30 years old.

Despite broad consensus in Richmond and other cash-strapped Virginia school systems that classroom conditions are a problem, most of the dollars needed to fund construction have not materialized.

Estimates elsewhere in the country are similarly staggering. The city of Baltimore has a \$3 billion maintenance backlog. Hawaii officials reported \$868 million in needed repairs. A report last year found the cost of repairing problems in Detroit schools had ballooned to more than \$500 million.

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

**Note from GIHN:** We have included numerous articles about the condition of schools in the U.S. and other countries in several of our previous newsletters. The U.S. federal government issued a [1995 report](#) titled "School Facilities: Condition of America's Schools." It concluded that \$112 billion was needed to repair or upgrade schools throughout the country.

See *New report on military housing* on page 4

## From Black Mold to Brown Water, New Report Details Serious Problems in Privatized Military Housing

A new report shows military families are living in dangerous conditions on bases. These are the people who are charged with protecting our freedom and yet, at the same time, they are fighting for their own safety inside their homes. The new data gives a detailed picture of what life looks like at local bases in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia.

Marine Gunnery Sgt. Nick Starr, his wife Heidi and their two sons moved into a home on Marine Corps Base Quantico in 2017.

"From the moment walking into that house, we could tell something was wrong," Heidi said.

In January of 2018, a busted pipe left two inches of water in the home.

"I remember hearing what sounded like, it was like a rushing water sound," she recalled.

The cleanup revealed a bigger issue.

"That's when I first saw what was an alarming amount of black mold all over the stud work, the wood, the drywall behind there, the insulation was covered in black," Heidi described.

According to DoD, contracts for these (military housing) companies last 50 years. But in recent months, the businesses have faced backlash for not providing the quality homes they were supposed to. There are more than 200,000 of them across the country.

"This isn't how we take care of people who make some of the biggest sacrifices for our country," Shannon Raszadin, a Navy wife and the executive director of the Military Family Advisory Network (MFAN), said.

MFAN did a survey of military families and just released the results. The group asked an open-ended question to be able to get the bigger picture: "Describe your experiences living in privatized housing."



## From Black Mold to Brown Water, New Report Details Serious Problems in Privatized Military Housing (continued)

New analysis shows 6,166 of the people who responded said they experienced maintenance issues. We're not talking about small things like a sticky window, but substantial issues that affect their lives. 3,248 said they had mold in their homes and 2,343 noted structural concerns.

"There's no reason why we should be here today where this has been raised to a level where Congress has to get involved," Maryland Congressman Anthony Brown and veteran responded. "The Department of Defense has to do better by our military families."

But there's a lot Congress and DoD knew. WUSA9 has uncovered warnings and documented problems in homes going back twenty years.

To read the article, click [here](#). To read the full report by MFAN, click [here](#). At the end of the article, they provide links to the Congressional testimony for each of the military housing companies and the testimony from each of the branches of the military.

**Note from GIHN:** We have included articles about mold and other problems in military housing in several of our newsletters. Our [March 12, 2019, newsletter](#) includes excerpts and links to some of those articles.

To read part of the May 2019 Reuters report on this issue, go to page 10 of this newsletter.

See *Renters in UK fall ill* on page 5



## 1 in 5 Renters Has Fallen Ill Due to Poor Quality Accommodation (United Kingdom)

Have you had trouble with damp, mould, or lack of heating in rental accommodation? If so, you are one of a huge number of UK renters who are struggling in substandard accommodation – and paying with their health as well their wallets for it.

A recent survey asked 2,092 UK renters if they have had health problems as the result of common property faults such as leaking pipes, mould, and insufficient heating. The results are in, and make for an alarming read: almost a fifth of tenants (19 per cent) confirmed that their health has suffered in accommodation that was not properly maintained.

People reported suffering from flu, asthma attacks, allergies, and eczema as the result. Almost half of those who exhibited symptoms (47 per cent) had to visit their GP, although 38 per cent preferred to wait until the problem went away. Disturbingly, for 15 percent of those experiencing health issues, the problem became so severe that it required a visit to A&E or hospitalisation.

Almost everyone (81 per cent) who had experienced a health issue spoke to their landlord asking them to fix the fault, but just a quarter of tenants (26 per cent) reported that anything had been done about the problem. This is despite the fact that damp and mould, and excess cold are all on the Housing Health and Safety Rating System list of hazards that could allow the local council to take a landlord to court.

Tara Hall, spokesperson for Hillarys, who conducted the survey, comments, 'Mould and damp are proven to cause negative health effects in a lot of people, so living with these for a prolonged period certainly wouldn't be recommended. However, when you're in a rented home it can be trickier getting these issues dealt with as quickly as you'd like. These results are particularly worrying as it seems like a majority of tenants are struggling to get these issues fixed at all.'

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

Tenants of The Enclave apartments filed a class action lawsuit stating the owners have failed to fix persistent mold problems.

County inspectors recorded more than 2,500 code violations in 829 units at the high-rise apartment complex.

## Silver Spring Apartment Tenants File Class Action Lawsuit Over Untreated Mold (Maryland)

Tenants of The Enclave, a Silver Spring apartment complex cited for more than 2,500 housing code violations last year, are suing the property's owners and managers.

Gregory Bennett and Ignacia Joyner on behalf of "others similarly situated," filed the class-action lawsuit in Montgomery County Circuit Court earlier this year and the first hearing in the civil case is scheduled next month.

The lawsuit, alleging current and former management companies and owners of The Enclave were negligent in failing to fix persistent mold issues for more than three years, is seeking an undetermined amount in damages, and an injunction requiring mold inspection and remediation of all units and common areas.

In February, county inspectors recorded more than 2,500 code violations in 829 units at the high-rise apartment complex, near Route 29 and New Hampshire Avenue in the White Oak area, and found an average of 3.1 violations per unit.

The inspection piggybacked on a September inspection of roughly 300 apartments that uncovered 367 violations. The September inspection was spurred by an uptick in complaints to the county from Enclave.

Between the two inspections, which included about 97 percent of units, 16 percent of violations found were considered health and safety issues, including mold, mice and roach infestations, according to inspection reports. To read the article, click [here](#).

See *St. James Elementary School mold* on page 6

## St. James Elementary School Students Test Positive for Mold (South Carolina)

At least two students who attend St. James Elementary School have tested positive for mold intoxication according to their parents.

The mother of one of those students shared test results and what she wants Horry County School leaders to do to address the issue.

For the last four months, the mold issues at St. James Elementary School have been the topic of conversation for parents and staff.

Meredith Smith says her daughter's health could be in jeopardy after results from an independent lab showed she was affected by mold bacteria found at St. James Elementary School, which was provided by a urine sample.

"The test showed unfortunately that my daughter's urine is consistent with that of a child that's been in a water-damaged building," said Smith.

There were several different mold toxins listed on the lab results from The Great Plains Laboratory, Inc.

"She had *Aspergillus* species in the form of ochratoxin-A in her system, as well as *Penicillium* species mycophenolic acid in her system," said Smith.

Of the 33 areas at St. James Elementary tested by Palmetto EHS back in February, five of those areas came back positive for ochratoxin-A."

Smith stated that doctors told her the bacteria is serious and could cause issues down the road.

"The stuff that's in my child's system is carcinogenic, immunosuppressant, it could cause brain shrinkage, it can cause kidney problems and all this stuff can happen later on in life," said Smith.

However, with the recent results from the lab, Smith said she has no other choice but to remove her daughter from the school for next year. To read the article, click [here](#).

Mold problems in an apartment complex in Dripping Springs, Texas, reminds us of the famous Melinda Ballard mold case that also happened in Dripping Springs, Texas (in 1998). See below for the links to these stories.

## Dripping Springs Family Claims Apartment Infested with Mold from Flood (Texas)

All the rain we had earlier this month is still causing problems for many families. On May 3, Dripping Springs took in several inches of rain in just a few short hours. Twenty-seven units at the Springs Apartments flooded.

One family said their home is now covered in mold, and they aren't getting the help they need from apartment managers — and it's taking a toll on their family's health.

"He's been wheezing, he's been coughing," said Heather Navarro of her two-year-old son Hunter. "There's times where he can't catch his breath because the drainage is so bad in his throat that he just gasps for air."

Navarro said the boy's symptoms come from the mold in the walls. She claims apartment managers didn't act quickly enough to keep it from setting in.

According to the Austin Tenants Council, a tenant is entitled to have a landlord repair anything that threatens their health or safety. That includes plumbing stoppages, a lack of hot water and leaking roofs or ceilings.

Three weeks after the flood, Navarro fears for the future.

"How much is it going to rain? Is it going to be fixed before it rains like this again?" Navarro asked. "Are they going to fix it in the future so it doesn't flood again?"

To read the article, click [here](#). To learn about the famous Melinda Ballard story which occurred in Dripping Springs, Texas, in 1998, click [here](#). Melinda brought "toxic mold" to the forefront and made the insurance companies react in panic as they quickly added riders to all of their policies saying that mold would not be covered.

See *Left in Dilapidated Ghettos* on page 7

## 'Left in Dilapidated Ghettos' -- Faces of the Federal Lawsuit Against HACA, Annapolis (Maryland)

"Out daily."

Those are the keywords of a medical script Glenn Rogers, 55, has on his refrigerator. The doctor wrote those instructions, he said, "because being in here is killing me."

Rogers for years has been living in public housing managed by the Housing Authority of the City of Annapolis.

But after moving to Morris H. Blum Senior Apartments — one of six public housing properties owned and operated by the housing authority — Rogers said in an interview with The Capital that his health took a turn for the worse.

He's sought medical treatment on multiple occasions.

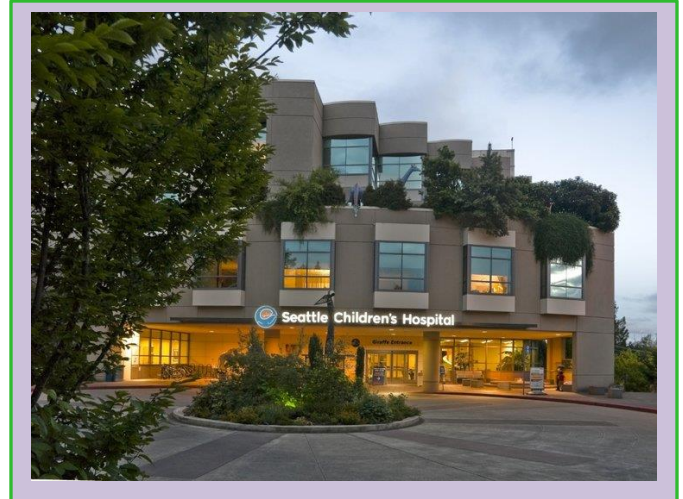
A federal lawsuit, for which Rogers is one of the plaintiffs, claims decades of racial discrimination against the primarily black residents of the authority's 790 public housing units led to the rundown condition of the communities today — and the health consequences associated.

The lawsuit names both city government and the housing authority, as well as Mayor Gavin Buckley and authority CEO Beverly Wilbourn. It condemns the recent history of the city as complicit in creating deplorable living conditions in public housing and allowing them to continue.

"These are serious allegations and we want to understand every single one," Buckley said in a statement. "Our Office of Law is working through it, but it will require researching legislation dating to the 1980s, which could take a few days — if not a few weeks."

The City of Annapolis treats HACA properties differently, the lawsuit claims. Properties owned and solely managed by HACA are neither licensed nor inspected by the city, according to the lawsuit.

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



## Aspergillus Mold Shuts Down Parts of Seattle Children's Hospital (Washington)

A common but potentially dangerous form of mold was found recently in parts of Seattle Children's Hospital, prompting the closure of operating rooms at the hospital.

A strain of Aspergillus mold was found last weekend, according to the hospital. The mold is typically dangerous for people with allergies or who have a respiratory illness or chronic condition. People with cystic fibrosis or asthma, for example, can develop a condition called aspergillosis.

"Though we believe the risk to our patients is very low, we will be contacting our surgical patients who may have been exposed," Seattle Children's spokeswoman Lindsay Kurs said in a statement.

Seattle Children's is sending patients who were scheduled for surgery to other facilities, including the Seattle Children's Bellevue campus, Harborview Medical Center and Mary Bridge Children's Hospital in Tacoma.

"We are working with an outside industrial hygienist to investigate the source of the Aspergillus and implement mitigation measures. We have also reported the situation to the Washington State Department of Health," Kurs continued.

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

See *Housing Conditions in DC* on page 8

## Housing Conditions Place the Health of Some DC Children in Jeopardy (Washington, D.C.)

A D.C. mother is desperate for help - she says her 10-year-old's life is in jeopardy, and it's shining a spotlight on a big problem in the District when it comes to affordable housing.

A look inside Felicia Ross's home on Affordable Housing Row home along 3rd Street Southwest shows water damage - and the mold that puts her child at risk.

Doctors say the mold and mildew are contributing to her daughter's severe asthma and respiratory failure.

Felicia Ross has been asking the D.C. Housing Authority to move them to a new home for months.

"I've given them handwritten letters from even her primary health care letting them know what she has can kill her, and we're still here. They know about it. I've sent them pictures. I've sent them emails," Ross said.

The doctors are asking that she be moved into an environment free of moisture, mold, and rodents, whose droppings can trigger asthma.

They also want her to be in a smoke-free building.

"They have seen two cases in the last year of children dying from the same conditions Amira has due, in part, to their housing conditions," said attorney Stacy Rueglin of Shearman & Sterling LLP.

She says the city has repeatedly offered units with conditions as bad or worse than what they are in now.

"At least two of them have been identified by the housing authority to the Department of Housing and Urban Development as candidates for demolition because they are no longer habitable. It's not just this family, it's systemic throughout D.C.," Rueglin said.

The Housing Authority says it needs more than \$2 billion to fix the problems over the next 20 years.

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



## Stamford Park Infant School Closed Due to Mould (United Kingdom)

An infant school with "high levels" of mould has been closed after a staff member had to be treated in hospital.

Stamford Park Infant School in Hale, Greater Manchester, was shut for two days to allow microbiologists to inspect the premises.

Trafford Council said they confirmed the presence of *Aspergillus*, a common fungus that can "make asthma worse".

It said air purifiers had been installed and air quality was now "satisfactory and of no concern".

A clinical consultant at Wythenshawe Hospital who was treating the affected staff member requested the inspection, the Local Democracy Reporting Service said.

A mould surveillance unit from Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust found "high levels of environmental mould spores" at the site in Cedar Road, which is also home to the junior school.

Head teacher Anne-Marie McDowell was forced to close the school on Monday and Tuesday while officers dealt with the situation.

A council letter posted on the school's website on Tuesday said air purifiers had been installed to address the "immediate" issue and work would continue to "address the potential causes".

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



## State Senator Robert Singer Fights to Protect Families & Schools from Toxic Mold (New Jersey)

Legislation sponsored by Senator Robert Singer that would establish mandatory procedures for the inspection and abatement of mold in residential and school facilities statewide has passed the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee.

“Our children should not have to read in moldy classrooms or sleep in buildings where the air isn’t safe to breathe. Mold can cause serious problems, but there are simple steps we can take to find it and abate it before it becomes the root cause of a lifelong health condition,” Senator Singer said. “By requiring the DCA to establish these procedures, we can protect generations of New Jersey families from falling victim to toxic mold.”

In Ocean County, tenants have been forced to cope with the threat of black mold leaching through ceiling tiles, putting children as young as 6-years-old at risk, according to an investigation conducted by the Asbury Park Press.

A 2004 study performed by the Institute of Medicine found that even healthy people can develop problematic respiratory conditions as a result mold exposure. The CDC also recommends removing mold as soon as it is found.

Senator Singer’s bill, S-2897, would require the State Department of Community Affairs (DCA), in consultation with the State Departments of Health and Labor and Workforce Development, to adopt rules and regulations that establish procedures for the inspection, identification, evaluation, and abatement of the interior of residential buildings and school facilities for mold. These regulations would be based upon the standards developed by the United States EPA.

S-2897 would also require the NJ DCA to establish rules and regulations for a certification program for professionals charged with performing hazard inspections and abatement work in schools and residential buildings.

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



## Foster Quad Residence Halls Close for Renovation Following Mold Outbreak (Indiana)

All Foster Quad residence halls, multiple surrounding sidewalks and the circle drive will be closed for renovation from May 14, 2019, to June 14, 2020, as a result of the mold outbreak.

This is part of a larger plan to renovate Foster, McNutt Quad and Teter Quad, according to an IU press release.

IU spokesperson Chuck Carney said the university had already planned to renovate Foster, but the project was moved up a year because of issues with mold in the dorms.

“We believe that this renovation in Foster and McNutt will very certainly fix the mold issue,” Carney said in an email.

Residence halls will be getting completely new heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. He said the old HVAC systems in the rooms were part of what contributed to the mold growth problems.

“This represents a more than \$170 million investment in new or renovated student housing on the Bloomington campus,” according to an IU press release.

This \$170 million is a portion of a \$300 million student housing plan IU approved in 2018 to be completed over six years.

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

## Reuters Report: Survey Shows U.S. Military Families Far More Negative about Housing than Landlords Claim

Military landlords often report high tenant satisfaction scores in annual surveys. But an expanded survey of families, conducted by a nonprofit, shows the opposite: Across the U.S., most responding military families have negative views of base housing, echoing Reuters investigative reports.

The survey, conducted by the nonprofit Military Family Advisory Network, was initially publicized in February. Three months later, the group has released a more detailed analysis of the results, providing a base-by-base look at the survey findings and a window into the problems most frequently cited.

Using this expanded information, Reuters has created a searchable database of base-by-base results, found [here](#).

For more than a year, Reuters has exposed slum-like conditions dogging the Department of Defense housing privatization program, describing how private landlords reap billions in payments even as tenants clamor for repairs. The armed forces began privatizing base housing for military families two decades ago.

The Department of Defense said it couldn't discuss the survey, but is "confident that privatizing housing was the right thing to do," a spokeswoman said. "However, we also recognize there has been a lapse in overseeing implementation of DoD's housing privatization program."

The survey results, built from responses by 15,000 families living in 46 states and 158 bases, echo the Reuters reports of widespread concern about housing conditions among military tenants. In all, 55% of families who responded gave a negative view of their base housing. Just 16% gave positive marks, with the rest neutral.

The survey results stand in stark contrast to those reported by private military housing operators. Those annual survey results can help companies earn Defense Department bonuses that, cumulatively, total in the millions of dollars a year.

Military landlords often report high tenant satisfaction scores in annual surveys. But an expanded survey of families, conducted by a nonprofit, shows the opposite:

**Across the U.S., most responding military families have negative views of base housing.**

## Reuters Report: Survey Shows U.S. Military Families Far More Negative about Housing than Landlords Claim (continued)

In all, more than 100 bases had an overall negative satisfaction score, with 6,629 reports of housing-related health problems, 3,342 of mold, 1,564 of pest infestations and 46 of carbon monoxide leaks.

The study turned up deep pockets of discontent:

- At Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington State, landlord Lincoln Military Housing reported 70% to 90% of residents were satisfied with housing in 2016. The nonprofit's survey, by contrast, found 10% of respondents had a positive view, and 58% a negative one. Tenants cited 204 reports of poor maintenance, 92 of excessive filth at move-in, and 78 of structural concerns.
- At Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico, a survey commissioned by Hunt Military Housing said 90% to 94% of residents were satisfied with housing in 2016. The new survey found just 15% held a positive view, and 59% a negative one. Kirtland families cited 43 reports of mold, 24 of vermin infestations and 3 carbon monoxide leaks.
- At Fort Hood in Texas, 71% to 79% of residents liked their housing in 2016, according to a survey commissioned by the installation's Australian-based landlord LendLease Group and the Army. The new survey found only 15% of base families had a positive view, and 54% a negative one.

To read the entire article which includes a table listing base-by-base results, click [here](#).

## A Dangerous Delay – The University of Maryland Waited 18 Days to Inform Students of a Virus on Campus (Maryland)

It had been six days since Olivia Shea Paregol walked out of the University of Maryland health center without an answer for why she felt so awful.

Now, the 18-year-old freshman was curled up in the fetal position on the floor of her dorm room at Elkton Hall in College Park, her brown hair resting on the shaggy white rug. She warned her friends, Sarah Hauk and Riley Whelan, to stay away from a plastic bag where she had just vomited.

The teenagers hoisted Olivia up and shuffled to the elevator. Once inside, Olivia leaned against the wall and slid to the floor.

“Don’t sit down,” Riley said. “Come on, it’s just a short ride. You can do this.”

“I literally can’t,” said Olivia, the words slicing her sore throat like knives. “I have to lay down.”

Olivia had been sick most of her first semester living in an overcrowded dorm that was infested with mold. But her symptoms now were far worse than a cough and congestion.

Her skin was pale, and dark circles cupped her eyes. The lymph nodes in her neck had swollen so much they felt like golf balls. The freshman — who turned late-night trips to the dining hall into stargazing adventures, belted out Miley Cyrus songs on demand and easily flipped strangers into friends — was sprawled across the elevator floor.

Sarah and Riley linked arms with Olivia and made their way through the dorm lobby into the cool night of Nov. 8. They watched as Olivia trudged to a parking lot where her dad was waiting in his car. She didn’t turn back to wave goodbye.

As Olivia battled her mysterious illness, the University of Maryland was rocked by turmoil.

Widespread mold that fall had forced the temporary evacuation of nearly 600 students in Elkton Hall after outraged parents besieged officials at the state’s flagship university.

The university waited 18 days to tell the community after learning the virus was present on campus.

## A Dangerous Delay – The University of Maryland Waited 18 Days to Inform Students of a Virus on Campus (cont’d)

**Widespread mold that fall had forced the temporary evacuation of nearly 600 students in Elkton Hall after outraged parents besieged officials at the state’s flagship university.**

The administration already was dealing with a full-blown scandal over the death of Jordan McNair, a 19-year-old football player who succumbed to heatstroke in June. Athletic trainers had waited more than an hour to call 911 after he showed signs of extreme exhaustion. His death exposed deep problems within the athletic department and led to the dismissal of the football coach, the retirement of the university president and resignation of the chairman of the university system’s governing board.

In November and December, the University of Maryland would become the epicenter of an outbreak of adenovirus, which can have symptoms similar to a cold or flu. But certain virulent strains can sicken healthy individuals and be particularly dangerous to people with weakened immune systems — people like Olivia, who was on medication for Crohn’s disease, a serious digestive tract condition.

In these cases, medical experts say, early detection can be key to treating severe adenovirus. But the university waited 18 days to tell the community after learning the virus was present on campus.

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## A Dangerous Delay – The University of Maryland Waited 18 Days to Inform Students of a Virus on Campus (cont'd)

Officials discussed — but decided against — notifying students with compromised immune systems and residents living in Elkton Hall, according to records reviewed by The Washington Post.

As the days passed, more and more students fell ill.

Many parents and students have denounced the administration's handling of the viral outbreak and the mold infestation, complaining its actions endangered thousands of students, faculty and staff on campus. In the end, more than 40 students were sickened with adenovirus, and 15 of them treated at hospitals, according to the university.

Mold does not cause adenovirus but can set the stage for other health problems. The director of the university health center, in emails to administrators, acknowledged that “mold can cause respiratory irritation that may increase susceptibility of any viral infection.”

In early November, the virus was quietly spreading through campus. Only days after Olivia had slumped in the elevator at Elkton Hall, she was fighting for her life at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

On Nov. 13, her father frantically called the university from the intensive care unit in Baltimore. When McBride called back, Olivia's father pleaded for information. What's going on with the mold? Or was there something else on campus making students sick?

It was one of the soggiest summers in Maryland history. By the end of September, more than 50 inches of precipitation had fallen. Eventually, 2018 would go down as the region's wettest year on record.

Olivia's room felt like a swamp, so humid that bath towels never dried. The air-conditioning unit in her room stopped working in the first week of September and had to be fixed repeatedly. By mid-September, Olivia and her roommate, Megan, had persistent coughs, and it seemed harder than usual to breathe.

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## A Dangerous Delay – The University of Maryland Waited 18 Days to Inform Students of a Virus on Campus (cont'd)

A pungent odor hung thick, and it was impossible to ignore whenever Riley and Sarah, 18-year-old freshmen who lived together on the eighth floor, visited Olivia's room.

Mold had surfaced earlier that summer in Elkton Hall and other dorms across campus. University officials dispatched housekeeping staff to wipe off visible mold before students arrived in August, according to workers interviewed by The Post. With damp conditions and overcrowding, it didn't take long for the mold to return.

It began to invade Elkton — on the blinds, under the beds, inside sneakers and all over the cooling units.

The campus again sent housekeeping staff, who said that they were untrained in mold removal and without the proper protective gear, to wipe down desks and chairs with an all-purpose disinfectant.

Days after Olivia's funeral, her friends Humza and Megan returned to the dorm and found mold growing on the shoes in their closets. To read the article, click [here](#).

Notes from Washington Post: Reporters interviewed more than 100 people, including students, parents, university employees, and county, state and federal health officials. Health-care providers and mold and adenovirus experts were also consulted. The reconstruction of events, including conversations, was based on thousands of pages of medical records; hundreds of emails, text messages, voicemails and other reports; and documents provided by sources and through public records requests.



## Scientists and Doctors Warn of Potential Serious Health Effects of 5G

We the undersigned scientists and doctors recommend a moratorium on the roll-out of the fifth generation, 5G, for telecommunication until potential hazards for human health and the environment have been fully investigated by scientists independent from industry. 5G will substantially increase exposure to radiofrequency electromagnetic fields (RF-EMF) on top of the 2G, 3G, 4G, Wi-Fi, etc. for telecommunications already in place. RF-EMF has been proven to be harmful for humans and the environment.

### 5G leads to massive increase of mandatory exposure to wireless radiation

5G technology is effective only over short distance. It is poorly transmitted through solid material. Many new antennas will be required and full-scale implementation will result in antennas every 10 to 12 houses in urban areas, thus massively increasing mandatory exposure.

With "the ever more extensive use of wireless technologies," nobody can avoid being exposed. Because on top of the increased number of 5G-transmitters (even within housing, shops and in hospitals) according to estimates, "10 to 20 billion connections" (to refrigerators, washing machines, surveillance cameras, self-driving cars and buses, etc.) will be parts of the Internet of Things. All these together can cause a substantial increase in the total, long term RF-EMF exposure to all EU citizens.

### Harmful effects of RF-EMF exposure are already proven

Over 230 scientists from more than 40 countries have expressed their "serious concerns" regarding the ubiquitous and increasing exposure to EMF generated by electric and wireless devices already before the additional 5G roll-out. They refer to the fact that "numerous recent scientific publications have shown that EMF affects living organisms at levels well below most international and national guidelines."

Effects include increased cancer risk, cellular stress, increase in harmful free radicals, genetic damages, structural and functional changes of the reproductive system, learning and memory deficits, neurological disorders, and negative impacts on general well-being in humans.

5G technology is effective only over short distance. It is poorly transmitted through solid material. Many new antennas will be required and full-scale implementation will result in antennas every 10 to 12 houses in urban areas, thus massively increasing mandatory exposure.

## Scientists and Doctors Warn of Potential Serious Health Effects of 5G (continued)

Damage goes well beyond the human race, as there is growing evidence of harmful effects to both plants and animals.

After the scientists' appeal was written in 2015 additional research has convincingly confirmed serious health risks from RF-EMF fields from wireless technology. The world's largest study (25 million US dollar) National Toxicology Program (NTP), shows statistically significant increase in the incidence of brain and heart cancer in animals exposed to EMF below the ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection) guidelines followed by most countries. These results support results in human epidemiological studies on RF radiation and brain tumour risk. A large number of peer-reviewed scientific reports demonstrate harm to human health from EMFs.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the cancer agency of the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2011 concluded that EMFs of frequencies 30 KHz – 300 GHz are possibly carcinogenic to humans (Group 2B). However, new studies like the NTP study mentioned above and several epidemiological investigations including the latest studies on mobile phone use and brain cancer risks confirm that RF-EMF radiation is carcinogenic to humans.

To learn more about this warning from scientists and doctors, click [here](#). For additional information about the health effects of cell towers (4G and 5G), go to [our website](#).

See *International Cities stopping 5G* on page 14

## International Cities Stopping 5G

### 5G halted in Brussels by Environment Minister due to radiation concerns

Plans for a pilot project to provide high-speed 5G wireless internet in Brussels have been halted due to fears for the health of citizens, according to reports. In July, the government concluded an agreement with three telecom operators to relax the strict radiation standards in Brussels. But according to the Region, it is now impossible to estimate the radiation from the antennas required for the service.

"I cannot welcome such technology if the radiation standards, which must protect the citizen, are not respected, 5G or not," Environment minister Céline Fremault (CDH) told Bruzz. "The people of Brussels are not guinea pigs whose health I can sell at a profit. We cannot leave anything to doubt," she added.

A pilot project is not feasible with the current radiation standards, and Fremault told Bruzz that she does not intend to make an exception.

The Brussels region has particularly strict radiation standards for telecom applications. The standard of 6 volts per metre has already led to problems in the past with providing fast mobile internet via 4G in the capital.

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

### Vaud, Switzerland puts the brakes on 5G due to health concerns

After last week's news about Brussels putting the brakes on 5G, Switzerland's 3rd largest canton (i.e. region) has also called for a halt to 5G, adopting a moratorium. To read the article, click [here](#).

### Geneva, Switzerland prohibits 5G; the prohibition will only be lifted again if independent scientific findings are available on the possible health effects of 5G

One day after their counterparts in Vaud, the MEPs from Geneva ask for a moratorium on the implementation of the 5G on the territory of the canton.

"I cannot welcome such technology if the radiation standards, which must protect the citizen, are not respected, 5G or not," Environment minister Céline Fremault (CDH) told Bruzz. "The people of Brussels are not guinea pigs whose health I can sell at a profit. We cannot leave anything to doubt," she added.

## International Cities Stopping 5G (continued)

"We are told that the frequency is almost the same as for 4G. But the 5G will be used to connect objects to each other. The environment will be increasingly loaded with magnetic waves, and no one knows if their accumulation is harmful to health," denounced the PDC Bertrand Buchs, the first signatory of the motion. Members also want to know the effect of 5G on wildlife.

Adopted by 58 yes, against 28 no (PLR) and one abstention, the motion invites the Council of State to ask the World Health Organization to pilot independent scientific studies. Unlike their counterparts in Vaud, MEPs in Geneva will not be satisfied with the conclusions of the report of the Federal Office for the Environment on this new technology. To read the article, click [here](#).

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

**In Switzerland, even though some cantonal governments have blocked the granting of permits for new antennas or have adopted a 5G moratorium, the telecoms bought the 5G licenses from the federal government, so they're using their existing antennas to start deploying 5G. Greater grassroots involvement is needed.**

To learn more, click [here](#).

## More than 200 Teachers Died from Asbestos – Kids at Risk in Classrooms (United Kingdom)

Illnesses caused by asbestos still kill around 2,400 a year in the UK, despite being banned in the UK - and this is even affecting schoolkids.

More than 200 teachers have died in the past 10 years from the effects of being exposed to asbestos.

And for each teacher fatality, nine ex-pupils can also be expected to fall victim to the silent killer, a study claims – an average of almost 200 per year.

Breathing in asbestos fibres can lead to mesothelioma, a cancer that develops in the lining of the lungs and can strike years or even decades after exposure.

Dr Mary Bousted of the National Education Union said:

“These figures are shocking. No one should have to suffer an early death because the building they work in contains asbestos.”

“Education staff are at risk but of even greater concern are children, who are more vulnerable to developing mesothelioma if exposed at a young age.

“The only certain way to prevent future deaths is to rid our educational buildings of this deadly material.”

Some 86% of schools contain asbestos, a study found in 2015. The material was typically used in buildings between the 1940s and 1970s.

Experts say it is a greater health risk as it gets older and starts to degrade.

A total of 211 teachers died of mesothelioma in 10 years, figures from the Office for National Statistics show. Of these, 128 died after the retirement age of 65 – showing the delayed effect.

The Mirror’s Asbestos Timebomb campaign for a national audit of all 23,000 schools in England has been backed by Britain’s biggest unions.

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

More than 200 teachers in U.K. died from asbestos - kids at risk



More than a dozen senior officials and experts at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency urged the EPA to ban asbestos outright because the extreme harm from this chemical substance outweighs any benefit

## EPA Ignored Advice from Staff Experts When Issuing New Asbestos Rule

More than a dozen senior officials and experts at the Environmental Protection Agency urged the EPA to ban asbestos outright, a new report shows.

Two internal memos obtained by the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization and shared with the New York Times reveal the EPA’s own scientists and lawyers advised the agency to issue a complete ban of asbestos instead of the recent regulations that only restricted its domestic use.

In the memos, dated Aug. 10, 2018, EPA staff members wrote that the agency “should seek to ban all new uses of asbestos because the extreme harm from this chemical substance outweighs any benefit.”

Asbestos is a known carcinogen. Exposure to microscopic asbestos fibers can cause malignant mesothelioma and other serious diseases.

The memos also noted there are adequate alternatives to asbestos.

In April, the EPA issued a new regulation that requires agency approval before importing most asbestos products.

The rule was a tougher take on the EPA’s originally proposed Significant New Use Rule, but the internal memos reveal experts within the agency feel it doesn’t go far enough.

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

## Research shows that E-Cigarettes Contain Microbes and Microbial Toxins

The following information is from the abstract.

**Background:** Cigarette smoke contains microbes and microbial toxins, such as endotoxin and (1→3)-β-D-glucan, that may have adverse respiratory effects. To our knowledge, the potential for contamination of electronic cigarette (EC) products sold in the United States has not been investigated.

**Objectives:** We aimed to determine whether popular cartridge and e-liquid EC products were contaminated with endotoxin or glucan and to examine differences according to the type and flavor of products.

**Methods:** We selected 37 cartridges and 38 e-liquid products with the highest nicotine content from the ten top-selling U.S. brands. Flavors were classified into four groups: tobacco, menthol, fruit, and other. Endotoxin and glucan were measured using an endotoxin-specific kinetic turbidimetric assay and a GlucateLL® Kinetic Assay (Associates of Cape Cod, Inc.), respectively.

**Results:** Endotoxin concentrations were over the limit of detection (LOD) in 17 of 75 products tested (23%), and glucan concentrations were greater than LOD in 61 of 75 products (81%). After adjusting for brand and flavor, the mean glucan concentration was 3.2 times higher [95% confidence interval (CI): -0.1, 18.4] in cartridge vs. e-liquid samples. After adjusting for brand and type of product, glucan concentrations in tobacco- and menthol-flavored ECs were 10.4 (95% CI: 1.8, 44.9) and 3.5 (95% CI: 0.1, 17.3) times higher than concentrations found in fruit-flavored products.

**Conclusions:** EC products may be contaminated with microbial toxins. Further studies with large representative samples of products are needed to confirm our findings, identify sources and routes of contamination, and evaluate health effects associated with the use of contaminated products.

To read the abstract and the full report, click [here](#).

Researchers selected 75 e-cigarette products (37 cartridges and 38 e-liquid products) with the highest nicotine content from the ten top-selling U.S. brands.

Endotoxin concentrations were over the limit of detection (LOD) in 23% of the products, and glucan concentrations were greater than LOD in 81%.

## Two Scottish Police Stations Unfit for Human Habitation (Scotland)

Two police stations should be closed immediately amid safety concerns over “horrific” conditions, the Scottish Police Federation has said.

Oban police station is “unfit for human habitation”, with mould and crumbling plasterwork, while there is a rat infestation at Lochgilphead, an SPF investigation found.

The interim report also called for police accommodation in Dunoon, Campbeltown and Lochgilphead to be closed immediately after “disgraceful” conditions were found, with mushrooms discovered growing in the shower room in Dunoon.

“These kinds of issues don’t appear overnight; it’s apparent to us that the issues in Oban and across Argyll and Bute have been as a consequence of years of neglect. A stark reality of a lack of capital funding available to the police service is something that we’ve been highlighting for many, many years.”

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

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### Quick Links:

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