GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

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









July 1, 2016

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Public Housing in the United States

Public housing in the United States was created in part as a response to a public health crisis caused by overcrowded, unsafe, unhealthy tenements at the beginning of the 20th century. But eighty years later, many of these buildings are crumbling. After decades of funding cuts and a growing list of needed repairs, Congress has a decision to make. It can either let people continue to live in unhealthy conditions, or it can take simple action to improve conditions for public housing residents. Click here to read the article.

Asbestos-Related Cancers Cost Canada \$2 Billion Annually

The Canadian government spends about \$1.7 billion annually on asbestos-related cancers stemming from occupational exposure, according to a recent Institute for Work & Health study.

Researchers included the costs of treating mesothelioma and asbestos-related lung cancer, administration expenses, patients' out-of-pocket costs, caregiving wages, workers' compensation and employers' costs to replace absent workers, among other economic burdens.

The investigation did not include cancers from secondhand exposure to asbestos and other cancers caused by asbestos exposure.

"This [number] is really just the tip of the iceberg," Institute for Work & Health senior scientist Dr. Emile Tompa told Asbestos.com. "When you see the magnitude of the cost, it makes you aware there is a need to take action."

Calculations were based on cases diagnosed in 2011 and those attributed to only workplace exposure. Tompa believes the cost will be closer to \$2 billion annually once non-occupational asbestos exposure is included as an amendment to the earlier report.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Party of Canada have pushed for a national asbestos ban despite some reluctance from special interest groups.

Canada, once one of the world's largest producers of asbestos, no longer exports the toxic mineral, but it still imports asbestos-containing products, including construction and automotive materials.

Click <u>here</u> to read the article.

See CDC Alert about Candida auris page 2

CDC Alert to U.S. Healthcare Facilities (Invasive Infections Caused by Multidrug-Resistant Yeast Candida auris)

Summary: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has received reports from international healthcare facilities that Candida auris, an emerging multidrug-resistant (MDR) yeast, is causing invasive healthcare-associated infections with high mortality. Some strains of C. auris have elevated minimum inhibitory concentrations (MICs) to the three major classes of antifungals, severely limiting treatment options. C. auris requires specialized methods for identification and could be misidentified as another yeast when relying on traditional biochemical methods. CDC is aware of one isolate of C. auris that was detected in the United States in 2013 as part of ongoing surveillance. Experience outside the United States suggests that C. auris has high potential to cause outbreaks in healthcare facilities. Given the occurrence of C. auris in nine countries on four continents since 2009, CDC is alerting U.S. healthcare facilities to be on the lookout for C. auris in patients.

Background

Candida auris is an emerging multidrug-resistant (MDR) yeast that can cause invasive infections and is associated with high mortality. It was first described in 2009 after being isolated from external ear discharge of a patient in Japan 1. Since the 2009 report, C. auris infections, specifically fungemia, have been reported from South Korea 2, India 3, South Africa 4, and Kuwait 5. Although published reports are not available, C. auris has also been identified in Colombia, Venezuela, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom.

It is unknown why C. auris has recently emerged in so many different locations. Molecular typing of strains performed by CDC suggests isolates are highly related within a country or region but highly distinct between continents 6. The earliest known infection with C. auris, based on retrospective testing of isolate collections, occurred in South Korea in 1996 2. C. auris may not represent a new organism so much as one that is newly emerging in various clinical settings. Although the causes for such emergence are unknown, they may include new or increasing antifungal selection pressures in humans, animals, or the environment.

CDC is alerting U.S. healthcare facilities to be on the lookout for Candida auris in patients

CDC Alert to U.S. Healthcare Facilities (continued)

<u>Interim Recommendations</u> (presented in part; see the article for additional details)

CDC is concerned that C. auris will emerge in new locations, including the United States. CDC and partners continue to work closely, and new information will be provided as it becomes available. CDC recommends the following actions for U.S. healthcare facilities and laboratories:

Reporting — Healthcare facilities who suspect they have a patient with C. auris infection should contact state/local public health authorities and CDC (candidaauris@cdc.gov).

Laboratory Diagnosis — Diagnostic devices based on matrix-assisted laser desorption/ionization-time of flight (MALDI-TOF) can differentiate C.auris, but not all devices currently include C. auris in the reference database to allow for detection. Molecular methods based on sequencing the D1-D2 region of the 28s rDNA can also identify C. auris.

Infection Control — Until further information is available, healthcare facilities should place patients with C. auris colonization or infection in single rooms and healthcare personnel should use Standard and Contact Precautions.

Environmental Cleaning – Healthcare facilities who have patients with C. auris infection or colonization should ensure thorough daily and terminal cleaning and disinfection of these patient's rooms using an EPA-registered hospital grade disinfectant with a fungal claim.

Click here to read the entire article.

Air Pollution Exposure May Worsen Lupus in Children

The results of a study presented today at the European League Against Rheumatism Annual Congress (EULAR 2016) show for the first time that an individual's exposure to air pollution may have a direct role in triggering disease activity as well as airway inflammation in children and adolescents with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE). This study, conducted in Brazil, has confirmed a direct link between an individual's personal exposure to fine pollution particles and their lupus disease activity.

Previous studies have shown that exposure of a population to outdoor pollutants was associated with an increase in hospital admissions due to paediatric rheumatic diseases, as well as a higher risk of disease activity in those patients attending a hospital with childhood-onset SLE.

Air pollution is a major health issue in Brazil, killing around 49,000 Brazilians every year as a result of its direct link to respiratory and cardiovascular disease, and cancer. Deaths from both outdoor and indoor air pollution represent one in every 26 deaths from all causes in Brazil, making it the ninth largest mortality risk in the country. The WHO has estimated that one in eight of total deaths globally are the result of air pollution exposure, confirming air pollution as the world's largest single environmental health risk. Air pollution is estimated to cause nearly half a million premature deaths each year in the European Union. In busy cities, where air quality is usually at its worst, the average life expectancy of people is reduced by over two years.

"Our findings have shown that air pollution doesn't just increase the incidence and prevalence of chronic lung disease and acute respiratory infections, lung cancer, heart disease and strokes, it is also an important contributory factor in childhood rheumatic diseases, such as lupus," said Dr. Maria Fernanda Goulart from the Department of Paediatric Rheumatology, University of São Paulo, Brazil. "With air pollution increasing in many major cities, paediatric rheumatologists can expect to see a resultant impact on the disease activity of their lupus patients," she added.

Our findings have shown that air pollution doesn't just increase the incidence and prevalence of chronic lung disease and acute respiratory infections, lung cancer, heart disease and strokes, it is also an important contributory factor in childhood rheumatic diseases, such as lupus.

Air Pollution Exposure May Worsen Lupus in Children (continued)

Using a standard measure of moderate to severe lupus disease activity (SLEDAI-2K ? 8), an increase of 18.12 $\mu g/m3$ in the daily concentration of the most dangerous of the airborne pollution particles PM2.5 was associated with a significant increase in lupus activity at four and 11 days after exposure.

This increase in disease severity may be reflected in worsening of a variety of laboratory findings, mainly renal (proteinuria, haematuria, leukocyturia) and haematological (thrombocytopenia and leukopenia) involvement.7

Measurement of two biomarkers after exposure to an increase in PM2.5 showed a significant acidification of exhaled breath condensate at days seven and 10, and an increase in fractional concentration of exhaled nitric oxide, both of which suggest a significant increase in airway inflammation related to air pollution.

Despite this worsening airway inflammation, children and adolescents with SLE didn't present any evidence of an increase in acute respiratory symptoms.

Click <u>here</u> to read the article.

New paper: Subchronic exposures to fungal bioaerosols promotes allergic pulmonary inflammation in naive mice

<u>Background</u>: Epidemiological surveys indicate that occupants of mold contaminated environments are at increased risk of respiratory symptoms. The immunological mechanisms associated with these responses require further characterization.

<u>Objective</u>: The aim of this study was to characterize the immunotoxicological outcomes following repeated inhalation of dry Aspergillus fumigatus spores aerosolized at concentrations potentially encountered in contaminated indoor environments.

Methods: Aspergillus fumigatus spores were delivered to the lungs of naive BALB/cJ mice housed in a multi-animal nose-only chamber twice a week for a period of 13 weeks. Mice were evaluated at 24 and 48 h post-exposure for histopathological changes in lung architecture, recruitment of specific immune cells to the airways, and serum antibody responses.

Result: Germinating A. fumigatus spores were observed in lungs along with persistent fungal debris in the perivascular regions of the lungs. Repeated exposures promoted pleocellular infiltration with concomitant epithelial mucus hypersecretion, goblet cell metaplasia, subepithelial fibrosis and enhanced airway hyperreactivity. Cellular infiltration in airways was predominated by CD4+ T cells expressing the proallergic cytokine IL-13. Furthermore, our studies show that antifungal T cell responses (IFN-c+ or IL-17A+) coexpressed IL-13, revealing a novel mechanism for the dysregulated immune response to inhaled fungi. Total IgE production was augmented in animals repeatedly exposed to A. fumigatus.

Conclusions & Clinical Relevance: Repeated inhalation of fungal aerosols resulted in significant pulmonary pathology mediated by dynamic shifts in specific immune populations and their cytokines. These studies provide novel insights into the immunological mechanisms and targets that govern the health outcomes that result from repeated inhalation of fungal bioaerosols in contaminated environments.



Lead-Contaminated Water in Congressional Staffers' Building (Washington, D.C.)

House staffers who work in Cannon House Office Building may have been exposed to lead-contaminated water for as long as nine months, according to a notice sent to chiefs of staff late Wednesday.

The notice stated that before recent lead tests, the last previous tests were conducted in September and turned up clean — meaning the water could have become tainted any time after that. It said that while Environmental Protection Agency safety standards stipulate that water should contain less than 15 parts per billion of lead, the Architect of the Capitol found that 5 out of 26 drinking water areas that were sampled recently had 17, 18, 20, 25 and 56 parts per billion. That's a 20 percent contamination rate, and the latter number — 56 parts per billion — is more than three times the safety limit.

Rep. Dan Kildee, who represents Flint, Michigan, sent a statement blasting Republicans for failing to do more for victims in Flint.

"Congress has so far failed to act on Flint aid and now some Members of Congress have had their own water shut off due to high lead levels in their Washington offices," the statement read. "Lead is a dangerous neurotoxin and high levels of lead in water anywhere is a public health emergency. It is long past time that Congress get serious about this health threat. Helping Flint families ought to be as much of a priority as ensuring safe water on Capitol Hill."

Click here to read the article.

For an update on the lead situation in Flint, Michigan, click <u>here</u>.

Family Forced Out of Flat Due to Damp and Mould (United Kingdom)

A young family have moved out of their housing association flat in Weybridge due to persistent damp and mould issues.

Fabian Fry, 36, said the problem at his Manor Court flat, off Monument Hill, is affecting his health, and that of his wife and two sons.

The block is managed by the A2Dominion property group, which has more than 35,000 homes across London and the South East.

Mr. Fry said: "The mould and condensation problems have been going on for ages and I'm getting fed up, it's making me really angry."

He said the problem has got so bad that his family have moved out of the flat to stay with friends, while his four-your-old son is living with the boy's mother.

"I refuse to go back to the flat, I've put in a homeless application as I've had enough, I can't take my family back there," Mr. Fry said.

"The thought of returning there scares the hell out of me because then I'll be back to square one. Why is mould so overlooked? I don't understand it. It's shocking, my family has suffered for so long.

"The way I have been treated is just a joke."

A2Dominion has been out to the flat to carry out mould washes, but Mr. Fry said it is not fixing the issue.

"I've been ill for a long time and doctors have never been able to diagnose what's wrong with me," Mr. Fry said.

"I get confusion, brain fog, memory loss, suffer from communication issues, and was tired all the time. There's a lot of anger and frustration – I'm stressed out about the situation."

Click <u>here</u> to read the article.



Mold Found in All Fire Stations (Cayman Islands)

Significant mold damage has been found in all three Grand Cayman fire stations, Chief Fire Officer David Hails confirmed last week.

Mr. Hails's comments came in response to questions asked in the Legislative Assembly's Finance Committee about mold present in the West Bay Fire Station that one lawmaker claimed was "growing out of the air conditioning unit" inside the buildings.

"The situation with the mold at West Bay is inherent throughout all the fire stations, not only in West Bay," Mr. Hails said. "At present, we're carrying out a survey to determine how we're going to tackle this problem."

Mr. Hails said it appeared one of the problems was that air conditioning units had not been replaced since September 2004's Hurricane Ivan at various locations. He said AC repair and potential replacement would be required at all locations throughout the fire service.

The Cayman Islands Fire Service operates three stations on Grand Cayman: one at the Owen Roberts International Airport, another on Frank Sound Road, North Side, and the third along West Bay Road in West Bay.

Click here to read the article.

Barnsbury Flats Tenants Demand Move after Suffering Years of Damp and Mould (United Kingdom)

Tenants in Barnsbury fighting a four-year battle to have repairs tackled in their block of flats are demanding that a housing association finds them new homes.

Residents say the damp and mould at Alderwick Court, on the Grove estate, is causing depression, respiratory problems, eczema, coughs and colds.

Doctors have written to Hyde Housing Association about the effect on children's health.

Father-of-three Dwight Semple, 36, whose problems with damp and repair started in 2012, said: "I don't even think the house will be ready by September and this has gone on for four years now."

In January, the Tribune revealed that four GPs had written to Hyde expressing concerns about the impact of dampness on the health of eight children living in Alderwick Court.

Clare Guymer, 41, recently commissioned a survey of her daughter Naomi's two-bedroom flat, which revealed 27 issues that needed tackling, including dampness.

"I want Naomi out of there," she said. "They should have moved my daughter years before, and now she has to have 54 repairs done. I don't know how many times we need to go back and forth."

Caledonian ward Labour councillor Paul Convery hopes Hyde will demolish Alderwick Court and rehouse tenants.

"Given the extent of the problems they should think seriously about rebuilding that part of the estate," he said. "And I would like them to provide new, genuinely affordable homes."

Click <u>here</u> to read the article.



Woman Believes Apartment Mold Caused Health Problems (Virginia)

A Chesterfield woman is at her breaking point with the landlord at her apartment complex.

Amanda Uzho believes mold in her Daniel Court & Dupuy Road apartment is to blame for a string of recent health problems.

It was last summer when Uzoh first had suspicions that something was wrong with her apartment.

"I could go anywhere else and be perfectly fine – eat, be active – but when I was in here I was laying around being sick, head hurting, it was just abnormal," she explained.

Uzoh was pregnant at the time, but after her child was delivered stillborn, she decided to investigate on her own. She conducted an at-home mold test. Even when the tests came back positive, she said her landlord refused to act.

Uzoh said she asked them repeatedly to treat the mold.

"It's beyond frustrating, especially in our situation with losing a child,' Uzoh said. "I don't even have words for it at all."

"They don't care," she said. "They're slum lording us so they feel like they can take advantage of us."

Click here to read the article.

Emirates Green Building Council Chief Warns Building Managers of VOCs (UAE)

Building managers often overlook the guidelines that ensure freshness in the quality of indoor air, an industry expert said.

Saeed Al Abbar, chairman of Emirates Green Building Council (EGBC), said indoor air quality is a critical consideration for regional sustainability levels as people spend more than 90% of their time indoors.

"It is therefore critical to ensure sufficient fresh air is provided to our buildings and harmful chemicals are not introduced into the indoor environment," he continued.

"While there are clear guidelines on industry best practices to be followed to ensure healthy indoor air quality, this is an aspect often overlooked by building managers."

Al Abbar's remarks were made at a seminar hosted by EmiratesGBC to underline the measures that can be adopted to improve air quality and the role of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in adversely impacting green building designs.

Panelists at the seminar said end-users also need to be educated about their indoor environment to make better decisions and become responsible consumers, owners, and tenants.

This includes the choice of paint they use indoors, the knowledge on indoor air quality-related equipment such as HVAC and exhausts, and their maintenance and cleaning.

"As our experts reminded during the event, even if design and construction can make a building 'green,' the wrong usage of products and poor maintenance of ventilation systems can reverse the effect and make buildings unhealthy," Al Abbar said.

Click here to read the article.

"As our experts reminded during the event, even if design and construction can make a building 'green,' the wrong usage of products and poor maintenance of ventilation systems can reverse the effect and make buildings unhealthy."

Preliminary Settlement Reached in Class-Action Lawsuits Involving Front-Loading Washers with Mold

Complaints about funky, smelly mold in front-loading washers started out as online chatter years ago and wound up in the courts, with a preliminary settlement reached with Whirlpool and Sears in several class-action lawsuits involving 5.6 million Whirlpool, Maytag, and Kenmore front-loaders made by Whirlpool.

The parties eventually came to an agreement and now members of the class have until mid-October to collect a rebate or refund.

The lawsuits claimed that the front-loading washers did not adequately clean themselves of laundry residue, and resulted in mold or mildew buildup, bad odors, and ruined laundry.

If you have a front-loader from those brands that was made between 2001 and 2010, you may be entitled to some cash. A full list of the affected machines can be found on the website <u>washersettlement.com</u>. You can also call 1-844-824-5781 for information.

Claims must be submitted online or postmarked by October 11, 2016.

Click <u>here</u> to read the article.

76 Percent of Gurgaon Offices, Homes have Poor Air Quality (India)

At least 76 per cent of the offices and homes in Gurgaon have poor air quality which leads to various respiratory diseases, a survey revealed.

According to the survey by Artemis Hospitals, as the particulate matters of the air indoors were finer then outdoors, the children and women were most prone to respiratory diseases as they remained indoors more in comparison to the men.

At least 31 per cent of people suffer from various respiratory diseases due to the unhealthy air quality in this Delhi's suburban city in Haryana.

The World Health Organization said low-and middle-income countries in Southeast Asia and Western Pacific regions had the largest air pollution-related burden in 2012, with a total of 3.3 million deaths linked to indoor air pollution and 2.6 million deaths related to outdoor air pollution.

During the study, the office complexes belonging to automobile, information technology and manufacturing units were surveyed. Survey of individual houses was done across the residential places like Sushant Lok, Nirvana, Sector 4 and DLF phase 3 in Gurgaon.

The study said 47 per cent of Gurgaon based people have also been found with symptoms of respiratory diseases, including Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

"We should be aware of both outdoor as well as indoor air pollution. In Gurgaon the situation becomes bad due to the ongoing construction work and vehicular pollution," said Himanshu Garg, head of respiratory and critical care at Artemis Hospitals.

As part of efforts against air pollution, a country wide awareness campaign was launched under name CLAIM (Clean Air India Movement).

As quoted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Bulletin, a pollutant released indoors is one thousand times more likely to affect people's lungs than a pollutant released outdoors.

76 Percent of Gurgaon Offices, Homes have Poor Air Quality (India)—cont'd

Vijay Kannan, Founder of CLAIM, said:

"Survey is yet another effort to draw peoples' attention towards hazards of increasing air pollution on their health. As per different studies indoor air quality is more dangerous than outdoor pollution. Since we spend more time indoors, naturally the risk associated with indoor air is more."

As quoted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Bulletin, a pollutant released indoors is one thousand times more likely to affect people's lungs than a pollutant released outdoors.

Click here to read the article.



Almost 1/3 of Social Housing in Quebec in Deplorable State (Canada)

Housing inspection reports obtained by Radio-Canada give a failing grade to 29 per cent of the buildings set aside for affordable, subsidized housing in Quebec.

The reports indicated that 707 buildings are in bad or very bad condition.

Quebec's housing corporation, the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ), rates the quality of each building in its social housing inventory between A and E, with grades D and E signaling conditions that are either "bad" or "very bad."

According to the documents obtained by Radio-Canada, 315 buildings set aside for low-income housing were graded as E.

A further 390 were ranked as D.

"It's no joke," said Robert Pilon, who heads the affordable housing group La Fédération des locataires d'habitations à loyer modique du Québec.

"It means your kitchen, your bathroom, are finished and worn out. It means you don't have a good quality of life."

Pilon believes that the poor quality of governmentowned, subsidized housing in Quebec can be explained by several years of insufficient investment in maintaining the buildings.

Fifteen years ago, the provincial government was setting aside only around \$30 million annually for the maintenance of its low-income housing stock, he said.

That number rose to \$343 million by 2008, where it has remained ever since.

In 2007, the SHQ estimated it would cost \$4 billion to repair and renovate its social housing stock. About half that amount has been invested since.

"It's more cost-effective, more reliable and more sustainable to start again from nothing."

Almost 1/3 of Social Housing in Quebec in Deplorable State (Canada)—cont'd

Laval has the highest percentage of poor social housing, with 31 per cent getting an E grade, according to SHQ documents.

The worst of the worst is the Val-Martin social housing complex in the Chomedey district – where some 60 buildings are in deplorable condition.

The complex, built in the 1950s and once privately owned, suffered a serious water-infiltration problem in 2006, caused by a torrential downpour and rapid snow melt.

"The infiltration caused mould, and when you have mould, you have unhealthy conditions," said Laval city councillor Nicholas Borne, who chairs Laval's municipal housing office (OMH).

Tenants had to be moved out, and now more than half the 534 apartments in the social housing complex stand empty.

Borne said the OMH has renovated 30 apartments from top to bottom, at a cost of \$150,000 per unit.

"It's more cost-effective, more reliable and more sustainable to start again from nothing," said Borne.

Click <u>here</u> to read the article.

California Supreme Court Adds Clarity on Punitive Damages Awards

The United States Supreme Court's landmark rulings in State Farm Mut. Automobile Ins. Co. v. Campbell, 538 U.S. 408, 123 S.Ct. 1513, 155 L.Ed.2d 585 (2003) (Campbell), and BMW of North America, Inc. v. Gore, 517 U.S. 559, 575, 116 S.Ct. 1589, 134 L.Ed.2d 809 (1996) (Gore), established three guideposts for determining whether a punitive damages award violates the Due Process clause of the United States Constitution: (1) the degree of reprehensibility of the defendant's misconduct; (2) the disparity between the actual or potential harm suffered by the plaintiff and the punitive damages award; and (3) the difference between the punitive damages awarded by the jury and the civil penalties authorized or imposed in comparable cases.

As a practical matter, the second guidepost has proved to be the most important because it allows courts to draw a line that punitive damages awards may not cross, although the line may move depending on the facts of the case and the reprehensibility of defendant's conduct. Ratios as high as 10 to 1 have passed constitutional muster, but any ratio greater than 1 to 1 is likely to face a constitutional challenge.

In an opinion authored by Justice Kruger, the California Supreme Court unanimously ruled that Brandt fees should be considered in calculating the ratio of punitive damages to compensatory damages regardless of whether the Brandt fees are awarded by the court or the jury.

In so ruling, the court emphasized that the issue was not whether Brandt fees qualify as compensatory damages but whether the fact they are awarded by the court, rather than the jury, renders them irrelevant to the constitutional analysis under the United States Supreme Court's decisions in Campbell and Gore.

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California Supreme Court Ruling about Punitive Damages

California Supreme Court Adds Clarity on Punitive Damages Awards (cont'd)

Another interesting aspect of the Nickerson opinion is the court's discussion of nearly all the United States Supreme Court cases addressing the constitutionality of punitive damages without once mentioning the admonition repeatedly mentioned in those cases that "few awards exceeding a single—digit ratio between punitive and compensatory damages, to a significant degree, will satisfy due process." State Farm Mut. Automobile Ins. Co. v. Campbell, 538 U.S. at 424.

The California Supreme Court has staked out its own position on the proper ratio of punitive to compensatory damages that arguably is inconsistent with the United States Supreme Court's guidance. In Simon v. Sao Paolo U.S. Holding, Inc., 35 Cal.4th 1159 (2005), the California high court upheld a 10 to 1 ratio of punitive to compensatory damages, relying on language in the Campbell opinion stating that ratios greater than single digits might "comport with due process where 'a particularly egregious act results in only a small amount of economic damage."

To learn more about this important court ruling, click here to read the full discussion.

Quick Links:

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http://www.globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/health-effects

Position Statement:

http://www.globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/GIHN-position-statement