NEWSLETTER
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GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

"WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS"

http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com

Inside This Issue

AAEM Conference, October 24–27, 2013

The American Academy of Environmental Medicine has announced their 48th Annual Scientific Meeting to be held October 24 - 27, 2013, in Phoenix, Arizona. The topic for 2013 is **"Chronic Disease: Highlighting EMF Hypersensitivity, Lyme, Mycotoxicity, Autism, Cancer and Much More."**

Chronic disease accounts for 70% of American deaths and 75% of U.S. annual healthcare costs according to the CDC. Our current system is in crisis. Funding for research and medical advances alone will NOT alleviate the cost or suffering of individuals with chronic disease. This year's meeting will delve into environmental impacts on human health reflecting important areas in clinical practice and scientific research highlighting mycotoxicity, electromagnetic hypersensitivity, lyme, autism, and cancer.

Air Quality Issues Persist at Guilmette School

Nearly three years after a mold infestation shut the Guilmette School for seven months, state health inspectors say much of the building still suffers from poor ventilation and air quality, creating conditions that can spread mold and cause respiratory and other health problems.

In all, 59 of the 107 rooms tested by the Department of Public Health inspectors – including the cafeteria and library, a principal's office and more than half the classrooms – had levels of carbon dioxide above the 600 parts per million that is the "preferred" maximum for public schools in Massachusetts.

The inspectors, who visited the elementary and middle school on May 21 in response to a renewed outbreak of mold in a first-floor classroom, also warned that the air quality in the school could be worse than their results show because many of the rooms they tested were empty or nearly empty of students and staff or had their windows open, which can lower carbon dioxide readings.

"In many rooms, airflow from supply and exhaust vents was observed to be low or non-existent," the inspectors said in their 67-page report.

They found water-stained wallboards and ceiling tiles, areas of poor drainage on the school's roof, and a drain in a restroom that was installed above the level of the floor.

The report makes no mention of the level of mold in the school, which is nearing the end of a $7.5 million scrubbing and reconstruction that followed the mold infestation discovered in 2010….but the air conditioning has not been turned on for longer than two years.

The inspectors also found that relative humidity in the Guilmette School ranged from 58 to 74 percent.

Click here to read the entire article.

See *Mold Forces Woman from Pellham Home* on page 2

Mold Forces Woman from Pellham Home

Judy Berneske has dangerous black mold in the common wall of her now abandoned townhome in Pelham. Because of the mold, she can't sell the home except at a give-away price, she said. But living in it makes her sick, so she's been forced to rent an apartment at great financial hardship, she said.

Getting rid of the mold right now is not possible, until all sources of water intrusion are corrected -- that's the subject of a lawsuit against a former neighbor who owned the townhome next to hers.

After a 5-year ordeal dealing with insurance companies, lawyers and health officials, Berneske said she still has no relief, stuck with a moldy townhome and lingering health effects from living there.

"I didn't see it as a big deal at first" in 2008, she said. "But I ran into nothing but dead ends trying to resolve it."

As a last resort, she said, in 2010 she filed a lawsuit against a former neighbor whom she said caused water to leak into her home.

She has an engineering report that points a finger at the neighbor for the water. She has a mold laboratory report confirming the presence of high levels of mold, including the stachybotrys chartarum species, commonly known as black mold. And she has a 2010 letter from a doctor saying she has asthma due to exposure to the mold in her home.

"I can't live there. I can't rent it. And I can't sell it," said Berneske, a 62-year-old living on a fixed disability income.

Berneske said the ordeal has opened her eyes to the need for reforms in building codes, the insurance industry and the legal system.

"I am a legitimate plaintiff with a legitimate case and yet I stand to lose everything," she said. "I'm simply trying to protect what is mine, myself and my property. But it appears current Alabama laws provide no way to do that."

Click here to read the entire article.

Basement covered in sludge and moss

Unsafe Conditions in Flooded Building

Tenants, who have returned to a Mississauga (Canada) high rise that was evacuated after the July 8 flood, talk of cracks in some walls and stench of what they think could be mould.

Winston Foster was relieved his family could finally return to their Mississauga apartment last week after being evacuated in the epic flood on July 8.

But then he noticed cracks forming along the walls of his children's bedroom, as well as one in the floor of his second-story unit.

The home also reeked of what he thinks is mould.

"It's not safe to live in here," said the 31-year-old, who is now moving out. "I don't know who decided that it was."

"No tenants are safe here with the scent of that mould," said Michelle Pacheco, who has noticed cracks in the corners of her sixth-floor apartment. "You don't know when the basement will fall in. It looks like a tornado passed through it."

The unpleasant odour seems to emanate from the building's basement, which a Star reporter observed is still covered in sludge and moss. The floor is slanted and separated from the wall in one spot. Cracks are seen in some corners and puddles of water remain on the ground.

Click here to read the entire article.

See *Indoor Pollution from Cooking Stoves* on page 3

Indoor Pollution from Cooking Stoves Continues to Kill Millions

A recent study in Environmental Research Letters (ERL) reports how indoor air pollution from cooking on open fires varies by season in Pakistan. Although indoor air quality appears to improve during the summer thanks to the stoves being moved out of doors, this improvement is accompanied by an increase in the background level of PM10 particulate matter in the village.

Mankind has burnt biological and fossil fuels to produce heat for a long time. The walls of caves lived in millennia ago are covered with layers of soot, and many of the lungs of mummified bodies from Palaeolithic times have a black tone. Unfortunately, however, the problem is still on-going because such indoor air pollution exists even today in many developing countries around the world.

Indoor air pollution ranks among the three biggest killers worldwide, after tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. The recent WHO global burden of disease report estimates the number of deaths from indoor air pollution from cooking to be around four million globally, which is twice previous estimates. The problem disproportionately affects women and young children. Indeed, children under five account for more than half of the deaths caused by indoor solid-fuel use.

Approximately three billion people rely on biomass energy – wood, charcoal, crop residues and dung – for cooking and heating their homes. These fuels tend to be burnt on open fires or low-efficiency stoves that are inadequately ventilated. This creates partial fuel combustion and the production of a raft of toxic pollutants. As a result, 3.5 million deaths are associated directly with indoor pollution each year; in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, another 500,000 deaths are caused by outdoor air pollution from cooking.

During the current investigation, we looked at how PM levels vary from kitchen to kitchen and, in particular, how indoor PM levels significantly decrease during the summer in both rural and urban areas. The results show that, the type of stove employed and how well ventilated a kitchen is, are important for indoor air-pollution levels.

Click here to read the entire article.

Women Champion Use of Fireless Stoves

A group of women have revolutionised cooking in rural homes using heat from insulated baskets. Popularly known as 'fireless cookers', the group has been making the products for sale to residents in rural areas at affordable prices.

The insulated basket allows pots to continue cooking food even when they are taken off a source of heat.

Started five years ago, Kisumu Indoors Air Pollution Network (KIAPNET) has been making the 'fireless cookers' with an aim of conserving the environment as well to provide entrepreneurial skills and create employment to low-income earners at rural villages.

The organisation aims to improve lives, empower women and mitigate effects of climate change. The global project targets 100 million homes with clean and efficient stoves and fuel by 2020.

''By making families less dependent on fuel, they no longer have to make a choice between sending their children to school and asking them to collect firewood,'' says the group leader.

''Embracing fireless cookers can reduce fuel use by 40 per cent, preserve food nutrients and save time,'' she says.

The group urges women, especially in the rural areas who rely on firewood is to embrace the 'fireless cookers' as opposed to firewood, which has adverse effects to both health and the environment.

Click here to read the entire article.

See *Washington Supreme Court decision* on page 4

Washington Supreme Court: Insurer's Communications with Coverage Counsel Now Presumptively Discoverable

The Washington Supreme Court recently issued a landmark decision barring insurance companies from relying on the attorney-client privilege to avoid disclosure of communications with outside counsel related to the investigation, evaluation, negotiation or processing of bad faith insurance claims. *Cedell v. Farmers Insurance Company of Washington*, 295 F.3d 239 (2013). Because national insurance companies frequently rely on the expertise of local Washington coverage attorneys to adjust construction defect claims only to hide behind the cloak of attorney-client privilege after denying coverage, this decision will benefit all in the construction industry – contractors, subcontractors, and developers alike – by exposing insurance companies' bad faith practices and subjecting them to liability under Washington's Insurance Fair Conduct Act.

The policyholder in this case, Cedell, suffered a loss in 2006. The insurance company, Farmers, delayed its coverage determination and eventually retained coverage counsel to assist with the handling of Cedell's insurance claim. Eight months after the loss, Farmer's coverage counsel sent Cedell a "one-time offer of $30,000" to settle Cedell's insurance claim; an amount significantly less than the $105,000 exposure Farmers initially estimated. Cedell accordingly filed suit alleging, among other things, that Farmers acted in bad faith in handling his insurance claim.

After filing suit, Cedell issued discovery requests to Farmers. Farmers produced a heavily redacted claims file and refused to answer interrogatories on grounds that the information sought was privileged. Cedell accordingly moved to compel the disclosure of that information and the superior court ordered that Farmers produce the documents it previously withheld or redacted.

The Court of Appeals reversed the superior court ruling, but the Washington Supreme Court granted review. In siding with Cedell, the Washington Supreme Court established a four-step process by which insurance companies must abide to avoid disclosure of communications which may otherwise be protected by the attorney-client privilege:

Washington Supreme Court (continued)

Click here to read the 4-step process.

The Washington Supreme Court's four-step process was established to protect two fundamental public policy pillars: (1) that insurance companies have a good faith, quasi-fiduciary duty to their policyholders under Washington law; and (2) that insurance policies, practices, and procedures are highly regulated in Washington and of substantial public interest. Those two fundamental public policy pillars apply to first-party insurance policies and third-party liability insurance policies alike; in fact, those two public policy pillars have even greater import in the context of third-party liability insurance policies because third-party liability insurers have an *enhanced* duty of good faith under Washington law. Thus, while insurers will likely argue the *Cedell* decision only applies to bad faith insurance claims involving first-party insurance policies, the four-step process established by the Washington Supreme Court necessarily applies to first-party insurance policies and third-party liability insurance policies alike.

Accordingly, insurance companies defending against bad faith claims in Washington can no longer rely on the attorney-client privilege to avoid disclosure of communications with outside counsel related to the investigation, evaluation, negotiation or processing of a policyholder's insurance claim. As the Washington Supreme Court aptly noted, "[t]o permit a blanket privilege in insurance bad faith cases because of the participation of lawyers hired or employed by insurers would unreasonably obstruct discovery of meritorious claims and conceal unwarranted practices." *Id*. at 245.

See *Lead Paint Trial o*n page 5

Lead Paint Trial—Class Action Lawsuit in California

Despite an internal company memo in 1900 that read, "any paint is poisonous in proportion to the percentage of lead contained in it," Sherwin-Williams Co. went on to become a leading lead-based paint manufacturer and to promote with other members of the industry the use of paint with large percentages of lead -- "the higher, the better."

"White lead should be the basic ingredient of all white paint and light tints," read a Sherwin-Williams magazine advertisement in the 1920s. "It is to these paints exactly what flour is to bread."

Sherwin-Williams is now one of five corporations that went on trial in California this week, facing claims they knowingly poisoned generations of children with the neurotoxic heavy metal and continue to do so today, with lead-based paint lingering and deteriorating on the walls of homes. The plaintiffs, 10 California cities and counties, are seeking some $1 billion in costs to strip the toxic heavy metal remaining on millions of residences throughout the state, and save "additional children from being poisoned" and millions of dollars in medical, special education and lost-productivity costs burdening "society as a whole," according to a trial brief filed in the Superior Court of California on July 1.

"They put out a dangerous project, knowing it was dangerous, and now they are responsible for helping to clean it up," said Owen Clements, chief of special litigation at the San Francisco City Attorney's Office, who has been working on the case since the lawsuit was filed 13 years ago. The trial finally began on Monday, after years of industry objections.

David Rosner, co-director of the Center for the History and Ethics of Public Health at Columbia University, will testify as an expert witness for the plaintiffs.

"This is a huge epidemic that has changed the lives of literally millions of children in America," said Rosner, who described a history of deceit within the lead paint industry and the ongoing public health battle in the book he co-authored, *Lead Wars*, published in April.

From another article about this trial:

"Defendants won't admit scientific truths — like the tobacco industry," Clements said.

Defendants were quite aware of the harm lead posed, the plaintiffs claim, when the makers and sellers of lead-based paints and pigments promoted them decades ago.

Lead Paint Trial—Class Action Lawsuit in California

The U.S. government banned lead paint for residential use in 1978, after nearly a century of scientific studies linked low levels of the paint to low IQ, learning disorders, sociopathic behavior and other maladies. The ban came several decades after other countries had forbidden its use.

Rosner recalled testifying in Rhode Island, one of several states where municipalities attempted to hold industry accountable for past damages to children and to force companies to eliminate remaining hazards. All lawsuits have fallen in the lead paint industry's favor, and Rhode Island is no exception. While the 2006 verdict in that case came down against the industry, the decision was overturned two years later based on a technicality.

"The court was under enormous pressure," Rosner said. "Industry devoted enormous amounts of energy, even threatening to leave the state."

Clements said a California Court of Appeals ruling already "rejected a lot of the defendants' favorite arguments." He said he is optimistic the outcome in this trial will be different. The defendants, which also include Atlantic Richfield, NL Industries Inc. (formerly known as the National Lead Co.), ConAgra Grocery Products and DuPont Co., continue to fight back.

Click here to read the entire article.

See *New Homes with Hidden Dangers* on page 6

New Homes with Hidden Dangers

Everyone knows at least one friend who has had to move out because that dream home turned out to be a source of headaches, mold, strange smells or allergic reactions. Here are some tips on how to avoid problem homes, especially when you are on the hunt for a new one.

1. Avoid basements. Basements often have higher levels of moisture due to domestic pipes, so they can be a haven for mold, which leads to health problems including eye and throat irritation.

2. Avoid new construction and new furniture. New construction and new furniture can introduce TVOCs (total volatile organic compounds) into the home, which can lead to potential health concerns such as burning in the eyes, tightness in the chest and severe headaches.

3. Avoid carpeting and rugs. Floor coverings easily collect particulate matter and allergens. A significant buildup of particles in rugs can lead to respiratory disease, high blood pressure or even lung cancer.

4. Check for water damage or leaks from the outside. Water damage or leaks can lead to mold spores and other pollutants entering the home. In addition to signs of interior water damage on the wall, also look for landscaping that goes all the way up to the wall, sloping of the land alongside a structure, poorly-sealed foundations and pools of standing water.

5. Beware of odors - especially musty ones

6. Look for properly insulated windows and basement

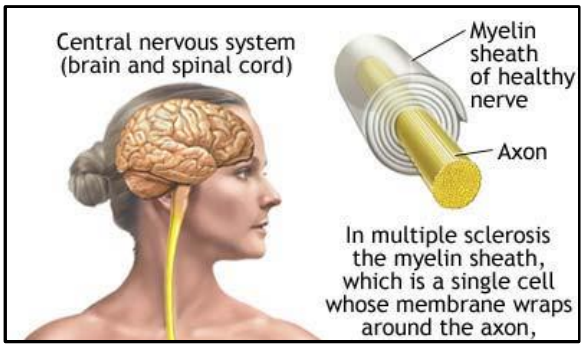
7. Dig into the property's history

8. Choose lead-free, low VOC paint (<50g/L)

9. Insist on an exit clause pending air testing

Click here to read the entire article.

Next Newsletter: September 1, 2013



Fungal Infection in Cerebrospinal Fluid from Some Patients with Multiple Sclerosis

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is the prototypical inflammatory disease of the central nervous system and spinal cord, leading to axonal demyelination of neurons. Recently, we have found a correlation between fungal infection and MS in peripheral blood of patients. The present work provides evidence of fungal infection in the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) of some MS patients. Thus, fungal antigens can be demonstrated in CSF, as well as antibodies reacting against several Candida species. Comparison was made between CSF and blood serum for the presence of fungal antigens (proteins) and antibodies against different Candida spp. Analyses of both CSF and serum are complementary and serve to better evaluate for the presence of disseminated fungal infection. In addition, PCR analyses indicate the presence of DNA from different fungal species in CSF, depending on the patient analyzed. Overall, these findings support the notion that fungal infection can be demonstrated in CSF from some MS patients. This may constitute a risk factor in this disease and could also help in understanding the pathogenesis of MS.

Click here for the link to the abstract.

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Working Together for Healthy Indoor Environments