

Allergy Associates of Fairfield County, P.C.
4675 MAIN STREET
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT 06606
(203) 374-6103
FAX (203) 374-1663

Robert Galvin, MD, PhD
Commissioner of Public Health
Department of Public Health
410 Capitol Ave
Hartford, CT 06106

December 28, 2004

Dear Dr. Galvin:

There are currently 1100 State Office Workers occupying a building at 25 Sigourney Street in Hartford. It has come to our attention that this is a sick building contaminated by mold. There are a significant number of cases of Sarcoidosis and Hypersensitivity Pneumonitis (HSP) among the occupants of the building.¹

Currently in the United States there are 140,000 diagnosed cases of sarcoidosis. Among the employees at the Sigourney Street building the prevalence of sarcoid is 40 times that of the national average.²

There are approximately 200,000 cases of HSP currently diagnosed in the United States. In the Sigourney Street building there is a 39 fold increase above the national average for cases of HSP.²

In a September 2001 National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH) study, it was reported that there were 15 cases of rare lung diseases among the employees of the Sigourney Street building; seven sarcoid and eight HSP. Subsequently, a June 2004 study performed by the Administrative and Residual Employees Union found an alarming rise in cases of rare lung disease among the employees over a three year time span. Forty-seven cases of lung disease were reported; 20 sarcoid and 27 HSP.¹

Sarcoidosis is a chronic, multisystem disorder of unknown cause. All parts of the body can be affected but the organ most commonly affected is the lung. Symptoms of sarcoidosis include fatigue, muscle aches, difficulty breathing, dry cough, joint pain and fever.³ According to the American Journal of Critical Care Medicine, Sept 2004, there appears to be a link between sarcoidosis risk and environmental factors. In a ten-center enrolled case controlled study of 706 matched case and controlled pairs, correlation between sarcoidosis and environmental factors was observed. Work areas that had a musty odor of mold/mildew had a higher risk of causing disease possibly due to the presence of microbial bioaerosols.⁴

John Santilli, Jr., M.D. ♦ William Rockwell, M.D.
Board Certified Allergists

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HSP is a clinical syndrome caused by inhalation of agents to which the host has developed an immunological response. There are multiple case reports that implicate various fungi as the causative agent. In nearly all cases of HSP, exposure to the offending agent occurs in an enclosed, indoor environment and most cases are related to exposure at work or at home. Symptoms may include an influenza-like illness with dry cough, shortness of breath, wheezing and fever.⁵

Based on these observations, this is clearly a toxic building affecting the health of the state employees working in the building. All the employees should be temporarily relocated and the building evaluated in depth for environmental toxins and molds as was done in the case of McKinley School in Fairfield, CT, per our suggestion.⁶

Sincerely,



John Santilli, MD

William Rockwell, MD

References

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3. Web MD: Sarcoidosis, http://www.mywebmd.com/hw/health_guide_atoz/nord215.asp.
4. A Case Control Etiologic Study of Sarcoidosis: Environmental and Occupational Risk Factors. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med*, 2004.
5. Fink J, Zacharisen M: Hypersensitivity Pneumonitis, *Middleton's Allergy Principles and Practice* 1373-1376, 2003.
6. Santilli J, Rockwell W: Fungal contamination of elementary schools; a new environmental hazard. *Ann Allergy Asthma Immunol*: 90: 203-208, 2003.

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