



April 28, 2021

To Honorable Lawmakers in Ohio:

With this letter I would like to raise awareness among lawmakers there in Ohio about negative human health impacts of exposure to indoor environmental mold and associated mycotoxins that may be useful when deliberating upcoming bills related to this One Health issue.

One Health is a *concept* and an *approach* recognizing that the health of people, animals and the environment are *inextricably* interconnected. The One Health Commission works to educate the public about topics that fall at the interface of these sectors.

Often overlooked but having affected countless lives in the United States and around the world are the public health risks from exposure to indoor mold and associated mycotoxins primarily within damp and water-damaged buildings. This issue of environmental mycotoxins in indoor living spaces negatively impacting health is a One Health challenge at the human/environment interface that is beginning to gain the attention it deserves.

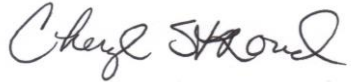
Many health institutions and government agencies presently only recognize that indoor molds and mycotoxins cause allergic and respiratory symptoms. However, these environmental contaminants can cause systemic illness that can be quite devastating. Many peer-reviewed medical and scientific publications have emerged clearly demonstrating neurotoxic, immunotoxic, nephrotoxic (kidney) and carcinogenic associations and outcomes from exposure to molds and mycotoxins.

In 2004 Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) representatives met with the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine Institute of Medicine (now referred to as the National Academy of Medicine) Committee on Damp Indoor Spaces and Health to examine this issue. The resulting report stated, "Greater research attention to the possible role of damp indoor environments and the agents associated with them in less well understood disease entities is needed to address gaps in scientific knowledge and concerns among the public." The committee concluded that, "excessive indoor dampness is a public-health problem" and recommended that the CDC conduct additional research to address the many outstanding concerns from medical professionals, scientists and the public-at-large about adverse health effects of indoor, living space mold and mycotoxin exposures. Indeed, CDC provides extensive education and advice on the topic. <https://search.cdc.gov/search/index.html?query=mycotoxins&dpage=2#results2>

Mycotoxins are serious environmental contaminants which contribute to chronic disease. Exposure of innocent men, women and children to mold, mycotoxins and other microbial growth in damp and water-damaged buildings is an incredibly devastating, yet entirely preventable, public health hazard. The same education and awareness is needed around toxic mold and mycotoxin exposures in indoor living spaces as is in place for lead, radon, asbestos, and other environmental contaminants.

I urge Ohio lawmakers to carefully consider these facts and to take appropriate actions to legally address this public health hazard.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cheryl Stroud".

Cheryl Stroud, DVM, PhD
Executive Director
One Health Commission