

CHESAPEAKE PSR

PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility support HR 1540, Environment - Mold Inspections - Standards, Reporting, and Penalties .

My name is Dr. Gwen DuBois and I am President of Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR), a statewide organization of over 700 e-activist physicians and other health professions who support sound evidenced based public health policy. CPSR is the state affiliate of Physicians for Social Responsibility which is the US affiliate of International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War, winner of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize again, as part of International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, in 2017. In addition to prevention of nuclear war, CPSR's work includes educating and advocating about the health effects of climate change and toxic pollution.

According to the Institute of Medicine 2004 there is sufficient evidence to link mold exposure to upper respiratory tract symptoms in otherwise healthy people. In asthmatic patients and those sensitive to mold, exposure is linked to exacerbations of asthma and other hypersensitivity syndromes including hypersensitivity pneumonia. <https://www.cdc.gov/mold/faqs.htm>

This is complicated by building construction and maintenance with too little attention to indoor water problems and moisture promoting the growth of mold. Dampness and mold may be linked to as many as 20% of cases of asthma and similarly, after exposure, may increase the occurrence of breathing problems in over 20% of those exposed.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1892134/>

After Hurricanes, most recently Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico in 2017, there were reports of increased incidences and severity of asthma related illness of which mold was one of the possible causes.

[https://www.jacionline.org/article/S0091-6749\(19\)30281-7/pdf](https://www.jacionline.org/article/S0091-6749(19)30281-7/pdf)

More frequent flooding associated with climate change is likely to make mold and respiratory illnesses associated with mold a growing problem especially for susceptible people with asthma and other allergies. A recent report in the Washington Post recounted how Annapolis which used to flood 10x a year is now experiencing floods 40 x a year.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/trafficandcommuting/in-annapolis-the-tide-has-come-in-and-out-540000-times-but-now-its-worrisome/2019/02/17/8e686b6e-3136-11e9-8ad3-9a5b113ecd3c_story.html

Renters in substandard housing not properly maintained are particularly at risk with little legal recourse for

address. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/health/bs-md-mold-low-income-housing-20190415-story.html>. HB 1540 requires disclosure about mold defects to tenants and provides specific rent escrow provisions. It will provide uniform regulatory standards for mold assessment and remediation, and require annual indoor air quality reporting and mold inspections.

Because of the health risks linked to mold, the increasing problems of flooding related to the climate crisis creating conditions that promote mold growth and because of environmental justice issues associated with low income housing and moisture, Chesapeake PSR heartily supports HB 1540. as good public health legislation.