Las Vegas, NV: Lawsuit Accuses Health District of Mold Poisoning

This case was first reported on last summer, when Dan Pauluk, a Health Dept. Inspector in NV, died from mold exposure experienced in his workplace.Now, his widow, very ill from alleged cross-contamination, is suing (SMH).

Las Vegas, NV

Lawsuit Accuses Health District of Mold Poisoning

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Updated: April 22, 2009 03:14 PM

A lawsuit has been filed against the Southern Nevada Health Department, formally Clark County Health District.
The suit accuses the department of negligence, conspiracy, malicious conduct and intentional acts resulting in mold poisoning from the health district building on Shadow Lane in Las Vegas.
The suit claims a husband of one of the plaintiffs was poisoned by mold in 2007 and died of his injuries while working at the health district. His widow and other plaintiffs claim to be the victims of cross-contamination.
Lawyers for the plaintiffs say they are considering a class action lawsuit because others may have been affected. The health district tells Eyewitness News it's not able to comment at this time because it's pending litigation.

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Poisoning death leads to lawsuit against Southern Nevada Health District
http://www.kvbc.com/Global/story.asp?S=10240123

April 23, 2009 05:16 PM PDT

He devoted his career to keeping other healthy and ended up losing his life due to a preventable environmental hazard. It's hard to believe where it all started.

Dan Pauluck worked at the Southern Nevada Health District, the place where doctors believe he was infected with toxic mold.

News 3 first broke the story in 2006 and now, as News 3's Katherine Whaley reports, his family claims they are suffering from the same illness and many others could be at risk.

In the months before his death, Dan Pauluck battled memory loss, skin sores, and organ failure. Dan spent the last years of his life fighting an agency dedicated to public health; one he believes exposed him to the fungus that would eventually kill him.

Dan died in 2007 despite repeated efforts he made to have toxic mold removed from the environmental wing at the Southern Nevada Health District where he worked. But Dan's health was only the beginning of an uphill battle for his family, who are now facing the same infection.

"A lot of my teeth came out in pieces and they were black as coal because of the mold," Dan's wife Wendy Pauluck told News 3. "...it's been hard - emotionally, financially, in every way possible. I basically had what he was dying from."

Wendy, daughter Chrissy, and even his caretaker Dean, say they are recovering from mold poisoning from cross-contamination. That's an infection caused by mold spores they believe were carried into their home days after day on Dan's clothing.

The Paulucks believe there could be many more victims out there; people exposed to the toxic mold who worked at the Southern Nevada Health District or even folks who simply came into the building.

That's one reason the family is filing a lawsuit. In addition, they are doing it to recover medical costs and lost wages and bring awareness to what they claim is negligence, carelessness, and recklessness on the part of the Health District.

"We believe that there is a strong possibility that there are many others out there that have been affected and they just don't know," attorney Tracey Eglet said.

And now, as the family struggles to regain its own health, they're hoping the courts will help them protect the health of many others.

"He (Dan) was a man who had great integrity and believed in doing his job thoroughly and that's why he took the stand he did," said Wendy.

We called the Southern Nevada Health District, but they are not making comments at this time. Two other plaintiffs are named in this lawsuit, including a former colleague of Dan Pauluck and her husband.

Lawyers have not ruled out the possibility of a class action lawsuit. A previous lawsuit to recover damages from Dan's death was filed in 2007. It is now pending in federal court. No trial date has been set.

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Are you at risk for mold exposure?
http://www.kvbc.com/Global/story.asp?S=10246473

KVB-DC TV, Las Vegas, NV
News 3

April 24, 2009 06:24 PM PDT

Poisoning death leads to lawsuit against Southern Nevada Health DistrictMold in the workplace

On Thursday, we told you about a Southern Nevada Health District worker whose family is suffering symptoms of mold exposure. The very same exposure they believe killed him.

News 3's Hetty Chang explains how it could happen to anyone, especially if your immune system is weak.

It has everything you can ask for in a nice Valley neighborhood: neatly manicured homes along a quiet street. So you can see why a bank-owned home stands out like a sore thumb. Outside, you'll find the obvious signs. But it's what lurking inside the home on Sickle Lane that will make your stomach turn.

"It's a pretty nasty smell in there," Craig Herrmann with Mold Eliminators points out. "Banks call us all the time for coming out and doing mold inspections."

Before going into the house we had to put on protective masks which kept us from breathing in whatever is airborne inside the home.

But the masks couldn't protect us from the smell. We're told the previous owner had a lot of pets and never bothered to clean up after them. "They just destroyed it - pets peeing everywhere," said Herrmann. "This is urine stains from the dog. You can even see there's fungal activity."

The mold is everywhere: growing on exposed floors, underneath the bathroom tiles, and all over the kitchen cabinets. Explained Herrmann, "If you see your well board starting to rot and look funny, that's an indication something is going on."

And that something, microscopic fungi, can have deadly consequences. "It's toxic to the person whose immune system doesn't react well to it - if you have a newborn child, immune system still developing, if you recently went through chemo."

Even breathing the air could be harmful. "If you have anything greater than a one foot square, you don't want to handle it yourself. You want to hire someone to do a remediation."

The job could cost several hundred to several thousand dollars. It's not cheap but experts say leaving the problem there could do permanent damage to your home and your health.

Recognizing the symptoms of mold exposure can be tricky because light symptoms are similar to allergies. More serious health problems include respiratory infection, seizures, and even cancer.

PAST ARTICLES ABOUT DAN PAULUK'S DEATH FROM WORKPLACE MOLD:

1. Las Vegas: Mold Inside The Health District

(News/Latest)

Read more about the very sad story of Dan Pauluk, a work-place mold victim, on the first anniversary of his death in July, 2007. We are very, very sorry, at The Center for School Mold Help, fo

2. A Killer Within: NV Health Dept worker dies from mold exposure

(News/Latest)

...xposure will horrify you, but we all need to be aware of just how deadly mold can be. "Wendy and Dan Pauluk enjoy happier times, circa 2000." (LV City Life) We encourage you to read ...

3. NV Health Inspector Sick From Mold

(News/Latest)

...his office is still waiting for his disability benefits _ a year after an arbitrator ruled in his favor. Dan Pauluk says his various and debilitating maladies are worsening, and he is frustrated th...