


F R O M	Name & Title	Dr. Letitia Dzirasa, Commissioner	Health Department  AGENCY REPORT	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201		
	Subject/ Position:	22-0129R – Informational Hearing - 311 Requests for Tenants Facing Chronic Mold  <b>Letter of Information</b>		

To: President and Members  
of the City Council  
c/o 409 City Hall

April 26, 2023

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review Council Resolution 22-0129R, entitled “Informational Hearing - 311 Requests for Tenants Facing Chronic Mold.” This resolution seeks a discussion about 311 requests received from tenants facing chronic mold problems in their homes and how the City can better address and respond to reports of chronic mold in housing.

Mold is naturally occurring, very common, and can be found both indoors and outdoors.<sup>1</sup> Importantly, mold growth requires moisture. Indoor moisture may be the result of a structural issue such as a leaking roof, or a systems issue such as malfunctioning HVAC system. Whatever the cause of the moisture, mold will be a chronic issue until the source is identified and repairs are made.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, mold can cause a variety of health effects that differ from person to person, including a stuffy nose, sore throat, coughing, wheezing, burning eyes, or skin rash. Some people, such as those with asthma, mold allergies, who are immune-compromised, or who have chronic lung disease, may have more severe reactions. Additionally, some people have no reaction to mold.<sup>1</sup>

Because the root cause of mold is moisture, it occurs naturally, and its effects vary from no effect to severe response in some people, establishing State and Federal thresholds for mold counts has been challenging. Currently, there are no State or Federal standards regarding what level of mold is harmful.

BCHD’s Community Asthma Program conducts home visiting for children diagnosed with asthma and because mold, among other things, can exacerbate asthma symptoms. If mold is suspected, program staff review the causes with the family. If there is an appearance of mold, residents are referred to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for further investigation into the source of the moisture. Without the source of moisture being identified and controlled, mold growth will be an ongoing problem.

Because no standards exist for addressing mold contamination, BCHD’s Bureau of Environmental Health does not conduct testing for mold in the field or participate in remediation efforts. The Bureau receives approximately 10 to 15 calls per week from constituents requesting that the Bureau investigate their rental property for mold. The Bureau informs renters that DHCD can investigate structural issues that might be causing moisture intrusion and provides constituents with the phone number for Housing.

Out of consideration for City residents seeking guidance around mold, BCHD supports holding an informational hearing.

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). Mold. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/mold/default.htm>