



## ***Three Home Wreckers Living Among Millions of Americans***

***By Rebecca Morley***

Today's housing professionals are confronted with a myriad of indoor environmental issues. Indoor toxins, such as radon, tobacco and lead, threaten the health and well-being of millions of Americans. It's a fact that the cumulative effects of such toxins in buildings—and especially in homes—can cause serious health problems and become deadly if gone unchecked. New developments in building practices, products, and technologies, as well as increased consumer demand for healthy housing, position the housing industry on the frontlines of protecting families from harmful exposures.

In June 2011, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is sponsoring the National Healthy Homes Conference (NHHC), bringing together 3,000 of the nation's top health and housing professionals in Denver, Colorado. Experts will address a variety of issues related to home health and safety, including these three harmful indoor toxins:

### **1. Radon**

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), eight million U.S. homes have radon levels above the EPA's recommended action level. Radon ranks as one of the nation's leading environmental health threats and is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers, accounting for about 21,000 cases annually. At the NHHC, experts will discuss the dangers of radon in sessions like *Lung Cancer Prevention Through Radon Mitigation – Affordable Approaches* and *Doing No Harm: Policies that Prevent Exposure to Lead and Radon*.

### **2. Secondhand smoke**

Secondhand smoke is another deadly threat, resulting in thousands of lung cancer deaths among non-smokers. According to the Institute of Medicine, it also has been linked to childhood asthma in preschoolers and infants, with low-income children at particular risk. Conference participants will focus on how to remediate the effects of smoking during sessions like *Smoke-Free Housing: Changing the Landscape* and *Are We Ready for Smoke-Free Public Housing?*

### **3. Lead**

According to HUD, an estimated 38 million housing units still contain lead-based paint. Lead-based paint is found in homes built before 1978, especially in homes built prior to 1950, and can cause significant developmental, behavioral and health problems for children. Experts will talk about the health impacts of lead in sessions like the *Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Outreach for Lead*

*Poisoning Prevention; and Lead Program Expert Panel: Renovation, Repair, and Painting Rule and Updates from the Field.*

**About the Author**

Rebecca Morley is the Executive Director of the National Center for Healthy Housing, a national nonprofit organization based in Columbia, Maryland dedicated to creating safe and healthy homes for children through practical and proven steps. [www.nchh.org](http://www.nchh.org)

**About the 2011 National Healthy Homes Conference**

The 2011 National Healthy Homes Conference is hosted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control, in partnership with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Conference will take place from June 21-23 at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver, Colorado.

To learn more about the National Healthy Homes Conference, visit:

[www.healthyhomesconference.org](http://www.healthyhomesconference.org).