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13 Md. health facilities to stop using pesticides

Baltimore Sun reporter

3:11 PM EDT, October 27, 2008

Thirteen Maryland health facilities are working to eliminate the use of toxic pesticides in their pest control efforts, a move that anti-pesticide advocates say is the first like it in the country.

The Maryland Pesticide Network and national advocacy group Beyond Pesticides launched the effort in 2005 after conducting a survey of pest-control practices in health facilities throughout Maryland. The findings mirrored Beyond Pesticide's nationwide report conducted two years earlier showing that major U.S. hospitals, nursing homes and other health facilities regularly used toxic pesticides.

Since then, the 13 facilities have worked with the organizations to adopt a green approach to pest control.

"We live in a society where unfortunately the regulation of toxic chemicals have not kept pace with the science," said Jay Feldman, executive director of Beyond Pesticides. "These facilities are committed to staying ahead of the curve."

While the chemicals used are legal and approved for use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, advocates point to studies that show that 25 of the most commonly used pesticides have links to cancer, birth defects and neurological problems.

The facilities are Johns Hopkins Hospital, Erickson Retirement Communities, Sheppard and Enoch Pratt Hospital, Springfield Hospital Center, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, the University of Maryland Medical Center, Broadmead Retirement Community, Copper Ridge, Harbor Hospital, The Forbush School, Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center and Hospital, Mercy Medical Center and Sinai Hospital.

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