



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor
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Division of Public Health

November 16, 2021

William Koch, Associate Vice Chancellor and
Phillip Lewis, Assistant Director
East Carolina University Office of Environmental Health and Safety
211 South Jarvis Street, Suite 102
Greenville, NC 27858

Re: Occupational Health Concerns in the Brewster Building at East Carolina University

Dear Mr. Koch and Mr. Lewis:

We are writing to follow up on the request for NCDHHS to assist with concerns about pancreatic cancer cases and other illnesses among faculty in the Brewster Building at East Carolina University (ECU). Specifically, we are sending the attached report from Mr. David Lipton, Certified Industrial Hygienist, following a walkthrough of the Brewster Building A wing to look for potential occupational hazards. Overall, we found no obvious conditions that could have negative impacts on the indoor environmental quality of Brewster Building A wing.

We have also provided the following additional assistance thus far.

- After discussing the situation with you in July 2021, our team shared a brief literature review and a summary of what is known about [pancreatic cancer risk factors](#) from the American Cancer Society. Most of these risk factors are not environmental, with the exception of exposure to chemicals in dry cleaning and metal working industries, which do not apply to the Brewster Building to our knowledge. It is our understanding that an additional detailed literature review may be underway by health experts at ECU.
- At ECU's request, in August 2021 our industrial hygiene team reviewed a 2019 indoor environmental quality assessment conducted by ECU Environmental Health and Safety in response to concerns of building health issues in Brewster A wing. It was determined to be thorough and comprehensive, with conditions representing a typical building that is 50+ years old and no indication of hazardous operations previously conducted there.
- We recommended that ECU contact the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) for a workplace [Health Hazard Evaluation](#) of occupational concerns. NCDHHS typically conducts geographically based cancer investigations following [CDC guidance](#); this guidance includes partnering with academic and federal partners when the investigation goes beyond the scope of the state health department. We understand that a Health Hazard Evaluation was requested from NIOSH earlier this fall and we have been in contact with colleagues at NIOSH several times to provide any information we can share as they conduct the investigation.

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Please let us know if we can provide additional support as the investigation continues or if you would like to meet to discuss further.

Sincerely,

Virginia T. Guidry

Virginia T. Guidry PhD, MPH
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