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## Report: Drywall sickness real

### Chinese product confirmed culprit

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USA TODAY

Chinese-made drywall used in more than 20,000 homes in the United States could have caused nosebleeds, headaches, difficulty breathing and asthma attacks in tens of thousands of Americans exposed to it, the federal government said in a report released Friday.

The drywall was installed in mostly Southern homes since 2005, and it has been the subject of multiple lawsuits. In addition to health-related complaints, homeowners have also alleged chemicals found in the drywall caused foul odors and corroded pipes and wiring. There have been five settlements totaling more than \$1 billion, but it's not clear how much of the drywall was replaced.

"The bottom line is that this modeling data suggests that levels



J PAT CARTER, AP

**A housing developer's sign in Boynton Beach, Fla., in 2009.**

of hydrogen sulfide and other sulfur compounds found in the Chinese manufactured drywall were sufficiently high to result in the health effects people have been reporting," said Vikas Kapil, chief medical officer with the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The report's release had been promised in 2012. Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., sent a letter to the CDC more than two months ago urging it be made public.

"Thousands of Floridians continue to wait and wonder if they

will ever see this critical taxpayer-funded research on the possible health impacts of problem drywall. This is unacceptable," he wrote.

Why some Chinese drywall had high levels of sulfur compounds is unknown, said Kapil.

Hydrogen sulfide is linked to respiratory problems when inhaled, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

As of Jan. 20, owners of 20,244 properties have registered for compensation in a multistate settlement program overseen by the New Orleans federal court where all the lawsuits were consolidated. Claims have been filed by homeowners, builders, contractors and construction material distributors.

For some homeowners, however, a cash settlement still has not been made. "They should be receiving it by the end of this year. We're still hopeful," said David Durkee, a lawyer with Roberts and Durkee in Coral Gables, Fla. The firm has more than 300 clients whose homes were built with the drywall.