

POLICY MINI-BRIEF SERIES

WORK-FAMILY INFORMATION ON: PAID SICK DAYS

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SLOAN WORK AND FAMILY
RESEARCH NETWORK
BOSTON COLLEGE

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WHY ARE PAID SICK DAYS AN IMPORTANT POLICY ISSUE?

"In terms of public health policy, paid sick days are a proactive deterrent to the unnecessary spread of germs, virus, and resulting illness, so in my view should be made available to employees wherever possible. From an economic standpoint, it seems an employer would willingly invest in paid leave for an employee who is ill rather than risk widespread infection throughout the workplace."

Senator Mary Ann Handley, CT

WHAT ARE PAID SICK DAYS?

Paid sick days address the need for some paid time off for short-term illnesses, routine medical appointments, treatment needed due to domestic violence, and caring for sick family members. There are two paid sick day models: a **minimum standard** that guarantees employees a certain number of paid sick days, and a **flexibility standard** that allows employees to use accrued sick days to care for sick family members.

Want more POLICY INFORMATION? http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/pdfs/policy_makers10.pdf

HOW DO PAID SICK DAYS AFFECT WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS?

FOR WORKERS:

Workers without paid sick days who stay home when they or their family members are sick risk losing their income, jobs, health insurance, and, in some cases, must turn to welfare.

FOR EMPLOYERS:

Employers without paid sick days encourage workers to come to work sick, resulting in presenteeism, which leads to:

- Lower productivity
- Higher likelihood of infecting co-workers and the public
- Greater health-care costs
- Increased turnover costs

SITES WITH MORE INFORMATION

- Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), at: <http://www.clasp.org>
- Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), at: <http://www.iwpr.org/index.cfm>
- National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), at: <http://www.nfib.org>
- National Partnership for Women and Families, at: <http://www.paid sick days.org>
- The Urban Institute, at: <http://www.urban.org/about/index.cfm>

Want more LINKS TO SITES?

http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=42&type=2&linktype=other&area=All

RECENT LEGISLATION

Paid sick day legislation has been proposed or enacted at the federal, state, and local levels.

FEDERAL (PROPOSED) The Healthy Families Act would ensure that all employees working 30 hours or more per week have seven paid sick days a year.

STATE (PROPOSED) Thirteen states have proposed legislation for paid sick days this past legislative session (AK, CA, CT, IL, MA, ME, MN, NC, OH, PA, TN, VT, WV).

LOCAL (PROPOSED) San Francisco, CA; Washington, DC; and Milwaukee, WI have successfully passed paid sick days legislation.

Want more LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION? <http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/bills.php#statutes>

SUGGESTED READINGS

- CCH Incorporated. (2005). *Costly problem of unscheduled absenteeism continues to perplex employers*. Retrieved April 9, 2007 from http://hr.cch.com/topic_spotlight/hrm/101205a.asp.
- Levin-Epstein, J. (2005). *Presenteeism and paid sick days*. Retrieved November 26, 2008 from <http://clasp.org/publications/presenteeism.pdf>.
- Levin-Epstein, J., & Boyd, L. (2006). *Paid sick days legislation: A legislators' guide*. Retrieved November 3, 2008 from <http://clasp.org/publications.php?id=15&type=1#o>.
- Lovell, V. (2004). *No time to be sick: Why everyone suffers when workers don't have paid sick leave*. (IWPR Publication B242). Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research.
- Lovell, V. (2008). *Some small and medium-size establishments join large ones in offering paid sick days*. (IWPR Publication B262). Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research
- Lovell, V., Gault, B., & Hartmann, H. (2004). *Expanded sick leave would yield substantial benefits to business, employers, and families*. (IWPR Publication B243). Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research.

DID YOU KNOW?

- On average, workers need 1.8 sick days a year to care for themselves and 4 days a year to care for sick children (Lovell, 2004).
- Over 59 million American workers (nearly half of the workforce) do not have access to paid sick days (Lovell, 2004).
- Nearly 86 million American workers do not have paid sick days to care for sick children (Lovell, 2004).
- Nearly 80% of low-income workers do not have access to paid sick days (Lovell, 2004).
- 35% of American workers have significant elder-care responsibility, and 1/3 of this group must reduce work hours to provide care (Families and Work Institute, 2002).
- 86% of U.S. adults believe that employers should be required to provide paid sick days to their employees (National Opinion Research Center, 2008).

Want more STATISTICS or the full references for above statistics?

http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/statistics.php?search_text=paid+sick

The Policy Mini-Brief Series provides a summary of Paid Sick Days policy information.
To learn more about Paid Sick Days, go to http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/pdfs/policy_makers10.pdf