



Paid Sick Days: Benefits for Families

Paid sick days are a valuable public health measure for families, but more than 1 million workers in Washington have no paid sick days to care for their own illness or a sick child or parent.

Paid sick days will improve family health:

- Children get better faster. Research has shown that sick children, when cared for by a parent, have better health outcomes. Women are most often responsible for family care giving, and paid sick leave allows them to care for their children when they are sick.
- Elderly parents get better care. Nearly half of those caring for a loved one are working full time. Paid sick leave promotes better care for elderly parents by enabling caregivers to meet their family responsibilities.
- Family income is protected with paid sick days.
- Sick workers are less productive. When workers are allowed time off without penalty to recover from routine illness, they return to full productivity more quickly at work.
- Family health costs are lower when families can address emergent health needs quickly.
- Preventive health is maintained, like immunizations and well-baby check-ups, resulting in better health care. This is particularly important for younger children who have higher rates of illness than those that are of school age.

Quick facts:

Parents need time off. Seven well-baby check-ups per year are recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Child care centers often require children to be symptom-free for 24 hours (one day of fever equals 2 days of missed work for parent).

Sick children in child care or school and sick adults at work raise contagion levels and lead to overall higher rates of infection for the children in care.

Most family caregiving responsibilities fall to women, but with women making up 60% of part-time workers, they are also the least likely to have paid sick leave. Women also make up the majority of minimum wage workers, most of whom do not have paid sick leave.

When parents don't have paid sick days, there are economic, social and business impacts. The results: parents may lose their jobs, be forced to go on welfare, leave their child home alone, or send their child to daycare sick. They are also putting the public at risk by spreading harmful cold and flu germs that cause serious illness and death to hundreds of thousands of Americans every year.