



NEW YORK STATE PAID FAMILY LEAVE COALITION

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THE LACK OF PAID SICK DAYS HURTS FAMILIES

CHILDREN

No parent should have to make a choice between caring for their sick child and a day's pay, however:

- Only 35% of full time employees with sick days are permitted to use them to care for a sick child.
- 49% of working mothers report that they must stay home when their children are sick, but half of them report that they must lose a day's pay in order to do so.
- 34% of working parents report that caring for their sick children has led to difficulties at work-- 12% say it has led to lost pay, and 13% report it has led to the loss of a promotion or a job.¹

Despite evidence that children fare better in school and recover faster from serious illnesses and medical emergencies if their parents can spend time helping them recuperate, the lack of paid sick days leaves parents in New York City with few options. Many are forced to send children to school sick, thus infecting other children and teachers.

- The National Association for Sick Child Daycare estimates that, on any given day, more than 350,000 children under 14 years of age are too sick to go to school or child-care but do not have a parent at home full-time.²
- Without access to paid sick days, parents may have to postpone or skip well-child visits recommended by physicians, and interrupt vaccination series or other necessary treatments. Children are therefore more vulnerable to preventable serious illness.³

SENIORS

Nearly two-thirds of Americans under the age of 60 expect to be responsible for the care of an elderly relative within the next ten years. Seventy percent of caregivers for elderly relatives work full time. They desperately need the flexibility of paid sick days so that they can handle health emergencies, take their aging parents or spouses to routine medical appointments, and provide ongoing oversight and management of health problems. When a caregiver cannot take time off, the elderly may have their health issues increase in severity due to neglect or be forced into short term nursing situations, at an average cost of \$158 per day.⁴

The demographics of the American workplace have witnessed a dramatic change over recent decades. As more American families are comprised of dual-earners and single-parents, it has become clear that the health needs of a family can only be addressed by allowing workers to take paid time off from work. Paid sick days would permit workers to maintain their commitment to the family values of caring for children and elders while maintaining their employment.

1 Short Term Time Off: The Current State of Play, Workplace Flexibility 2010, Winter 2006, pg. 1, available at http://www.law.georgetown.edu/workplaceflexibility2010/definition/general/STO_Memo.pdf.

2 Lovell V. (2007). Public Health and Paid Sick Days: Action To Limit the Spread of Disease and Improve Health in Massachusetts

3 University of Michigan Health Systems, Children with Chronic Conditions, <http://www.med.umich.edu/1libr/yourchild/chronic/htm>, 2006.

4 Lovell V. (2006). Valuing Good Health in San Francisco: The Costs and Benefits of a Proposed Paid Sick Days Policy. Institute for Women's Policy Research Report #B252.