Policymakers and Researchers: Connecting Two Different Worlds

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An Example of Research to Action: Work and Caring for Health in the United States
What are the reasons for taking cutbacks?

- Health of family member
- School or child care
- Elder care
- Death
- Transportation and other instrumental support
- Other reasons

- 25 to 34 years old
- 35 to 44 years old
- 25 to 34 years old
- 55 to 64 years old
- 65 to 74 years old
Importance for Children’s Health

• Studies have shown that sick children have shorter recovery periods, better vital signs, and fewer symptoms when their parents participate in their care.

• The presence of parents has been shown to reduce hospital stays by 31%. When parents are involved in children’s care, children recover more rapidly from outpatient procedures as well.

• Research has shown that parents play important roles in the care of children with chronic as well as acute conditions. Receiving care from their parents is important for children’s mental as well as physical health.

• *Parents who received paid leave are more than five times as likely to be able to care for sick children, even after taking into account demographic differences.*
Lack Basic Fringe Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of working parents who</th>
<th>0%-25%</th>
<th>26%-50%</th>
<th>51%-75%</th>
<th>76%-100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack sick leave</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack vacation leave</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack sick and vacation leave</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have 2 weeks or less of sick and vacation leave</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: The above figure is based on analyses we conducted with data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. Bars represent parents who lacked benefits some or all of the time they worked between 1990 and 1996 (1996 data were the most recent available at the time of this study).

Research Collaborations

Paid Sick Leave Coverage Across the United States

• 49% of workers lack paid sick leave to care for their own illness; 67% of workers lack paid leave that may be used for doctors’ appointments; 70% of workers lack paid leave to care for sick children.
• Only 16% of part-time workers have paid sick leave, compared to 60% who work full-time.
• 39% of health care workers, 67% of retail employees, and 86% of food service workers lack paid sick leave.
• Workers in the highest wage quartile are three times as likely to have paid sick leave as workers in the lowest wage quartile.

Cost-benefit Analyses of Paid Sick Leave Legislation

Table 1. Summary of HFA costs and savings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>Total ($ millions)</th>
<th>Per worker per week (over all wage and salary employees)</th>
<th>Per worker per week (over workers covered by HFA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wages and payroll taxes for:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newly covered workers</td>
<td>$ 17,549.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers with new leave uses</td>
<td>2,293.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers with additional leave days</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative expenses</td>
<td>$356.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total costs</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 20,235.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3.04</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5.98</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Savings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages currently paid to unhealthy workers with low productivity (includes payroll taxes)</td>
<td>1,571.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced turnover</td>
<td>25,840.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced spread of the flu at work</td>
<td>738.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced short-term nursing home stays</td>
<td>225.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total savings</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 28,375.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4.26</strong></td>
<td><strong>$8.38</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Advocacy Collaborations: The National Partnership for Women and Families

- Fact sheets consolidating research efforts on the impact of paid sick leave in regards to families, employers, low-wage workers, and public health.
- Links to studies of sick leave availability, public health reports, and cost-benefit analyses.
- Detailed comparisons of sick leave legislation currently in the works at the city, state, and federal level.
- Templates for letters of support, op-eds, and petitions regarding sick days.
- Links to press coverage of the discussion on the need for paid sick days.
Research that Focuses the Policy Debate

- At least 145 countries provide paid sick leave to employees.

- At least 136 countries provide paid sickness benefits for at least one week.

- At least 81 countries provide paid sickness benefits for at least 26 weeks or until recovery. (In some countries, payments may not begin until after the waiting period.)

The Healthy Families Act

• First introduced by Senator Kennedy and Representative Rosa DeLauro in 2005.
• Reintroduced in the House and Senate in 2007.
• Applies to businesses with more than 15 employees.
• Requires employers to provide 7 paid sick days to full-time employees and an adjusted number of paid sick days to part-time employees.
• Sick days can be used to address one’s own health needs or the needs of family members.
• Sick days can be used to address preventive health needs as well as illnesses.
California Paid Family Leave Law

- Effective July 1, 2004.
- Provides up to 6 weeks of paid leave per year to care for a new baby or newly adopted child or to care for a seriously ill child, parent, spouse, or domestic partner.
- 55% wage replacement.
- All workers who pay into the existing State Disability Insurance Program are eligible.
- 100% employee funded.
- Program administered by the state and not the employer.
- Does not guarantee job protection for workers on leave.
- Movement to expand family members covered to include grandparents, siblings, parents-in-law, and grandchildren.
San Francisco Paid Sick Leave Ordinance

• Approved by 61% of voters in November, 2006.

• Effective February 5, 2007.

• Law covers full-time, part-time, temporary, and domestic employees.

• New employees earn sick leave after 3 months in a position.

• Employees earn 1 hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours of work.

• Employees who work in businesses with fewer than 10 employees are entitled to up to 40 hours of paid sick leave, while employees who work in businesses with more than 10 employees are entitled to up to 72 hours of paid sick leave.

• Employees can use paid sick leave to care not only for their own health needs, but also for the health needs of family members.
The Debate over “Family Members”

- **San Francisco Sick Leave Ordinance**: Parents, siblings, children, spouse or registered domestic partner, grandparents, or any one person designated at the beginning of employment who is not covered by other categories and is in need of care.

- **Healthy Families Act**: A child, a parent, a spouse, or any other individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship.

- **California Paid Family Leave**: A parent, child, spouse or registered domestic partner.
Who are cutbacks taken for?

Employee’s children accounted for more cutbacks than any other group receiving care, but even when adult children were included as well as preschool and school-age children and even when health and educational needs were included as well as child care and other needs, they still accounted for only 42 percent of cutbacks.

15% of cutbacks were taken to care for parents

12% for spouses or partners

7% for grandchildren

24% for other family members

First Steps in Moving Research to Action: Work and Global Health
Children experienced accidents or emergencies while parent was at work

Parent reported negative impact of parental working conditions on children's health

Percentage of Parents Who Reported Risks to Their Children's Health

Frequency Children’s Health Worsened While Parents Work

Source: Data from Project on Global Working Families in-depth interviews with working caregivers. Analyses in the above figure are based on households with a 0-14 year old child.
Parent had difficulties at work because of caring for a sick child or having other caregiving responsibilities

Parent lost pay or job promotions or had difficulty retaining jobs because of need to care for sick children

**Frequency Working Parents Experience Difficulties at Work as a Result of Caring for Sick Children**

**Source:** Data from Project on Global Working Families in-depth interviews with working caregivers. Analyses in the above figure are based on households with a 0-14 year old.
Frequency of Inadequate Care for Sick Children

Botswana: 60%
Mexico: 43%
Vietnam: 48%

Source: Data from Project on Global Working Families in-depth interviews with working caregivers. Analyses in the above figure are based on households with a 0-14 year old child.
Good Working Conditions Reduce the Likelihood of Children Being Left Home Alone Sick

Source: Data from in-depth interviews with working caregivers, 1999—2001.
Could always alter work schedule to meet caregiving responsibilities. Could get leave from work for caregiving. Could alter work schedule and could get leave for caregiving. Could alter work schedule and could get paid leave for caregiving.

Parents received benefit or had flexibility. Parents did not receive benefit or have flexibility.

Good Working Conditions Reduce the Likelihood of Children Being Sent to School or Day Care Sick.

Source: Data from in-depth interviews with working caregivers, 1999—2001.
Action on a Global Scale: The Unanswered Questions