

SICK LEAVE FACT SHEET

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Sick leave matters to children's health

- Research has shown that parental availability is critical for children's physical and mental health. Studies have shown that when their parents participate in their care, sick children:
 - recover more rapidly from illnesses and injuries
 - demonstrate better vital signs
 - have fewer symptoms
 - have decreased anxiety

Sick leave matters to adult's health

- Research has also shown that adults have better health outcomes when they receive support from family members. An extensive body of research demonstrates that elderly individuals live longer when they have higher levels of social supports from friends and family.
- Social supports have been linked with reduced severity of myocardial infarction, and improved survival rates for patients with coronary heart disease and myocardial infarction.

Sick leave is critical in enabling parents to care for their children's health

- A study by Heymann and colleagues found that parents often must go to work when their children are sick: 58% of young parents said they continued to go to work when their children were sick.
- Of the 42 percent who were able to stay at home with their sick children, more than half said they could do so because they received some type of paid leave.

Sick leave matters to jobs and economic security

Providing necessary health care for oneself or one's family without paid sick leave can have significant consequences at work.

- The Widening Gap reports research demonstrating that 34 percent of parents reported that caring for their sick children led to difficulties at work; 12 percent said it led to lost pay, and 13 percent to loss of promotions or jobs.
- A study by Earle and Heymann showed that both having a health limitation and having a child with a health limitation—two circumstances likely to increase the need for sick leave—significantly increased risk of job loss among women previously on welfare. Having a health problem led to a 53% increase in job loss among low-wage mothers and having a child with health problems, a 36% increase.

Millions lack sick leave in the U.S.

- Under federal law, the United States does not provide paid leave to sick employees. Even the unpaid sick leave provided by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is not available to all workers or for all health problems.
- Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that almost half (47 percent) of private sector workers have no paid sick leave.
- A recent study by Lovell of IWPR found that 59 million workers lack paid sick leave.
- Often, those who are lucky enough to have paid sick leave are not allowed to use it to care for a sick family member. In one Kaiser Family Foundation study, 49 percent of working mothers reported that they did not get paid when they stayed home to care for their sick children.

The working poor are hardest hit

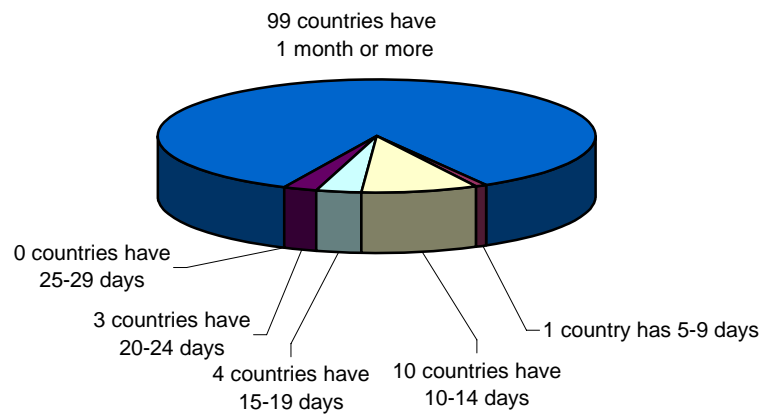
- While many families cannot reliably count on paid sick leave, working poor families are at highest risk: A study by Heymann and colleagues found that 74% of working poor parents with incomes below 100% of poverty line did not consistently have paid sick leave over a five-year period compared to 43% of those above 200% of poverty line.
- This same study found that while 80 percent of working poor parents with incomes below 100% of poverty line had less than two weeks of paid sick and vacation leave some or all of the time over a five-year period, only 45 percent of non-poor families faced these same gaps in essential benefits.

Paid sick leave is achievable

The Work, Family and Equity Index, developed by the Project on Global Working Families at Harvard University, shows that sick leave is widely available:

- At least 139 countries provide paid sick leave to employees
- At least 117 countries provide paid sickness benefits for at least one week
- At least 76 countries provide paid sickness benefits for at least 26 weeks or until recovery
- Of the 126 countries with paid sick leave for which data about the rate at which that leave is paid were available, 116 paid a minimum rate of at least 50 percent of wages.

Work, Family, and Equity Index findings on duration of paid sick leave around the globe



Note: The United States does not guarantee employees any paid sick leave.

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