

## Congress: Enact A Paid Family and Medical Leave Program

Treatment for and recovery from serious illnesses and conditions are often difficult and time consuming. The flexibility to balance treatment and employment is essential for patients and caregivers.

For example, multiple studies show that cancer patients and caregivers who have paid leave have

**Higher rates of job retention**



&

**Lower rates of financial burden**



...than those who do not have access to paid leave.<sup>1,2,3</sup> Without access to paid family and medical leave, patients and caregivers risk financial hardship or not getting the care they or their loved ones need.

**Patients and Caregivers for Paid Leave** urges lawmakers to create a national paid family and medical leave program that includes paid leave benefits for individuals with serious illnesses and health conditions and caregivers.

**Patients and Caregivers for Paid Leave** represents caregivers and patients with serious illnesses and conditions including cancer, heart disease, ALS, muscular dystrophy, epilepsy, AIDS and HIV, cystic fibrosis, hemophilia, Alzheimer's, and many others. Our organizations have long fought to ensure that patients have access to care to treat their serious illnesses and health conditions.

**Being able to take paid time off work is fundamentally an access to care issue.**

Only about one-fifth of workers in the United States have access to employer-paid family leave<sup>4</sup> and only two in five have access to short-term disability insurance through their jobs that allows them to receive partial pay while they recover from their own serious health issue.<sup>5</sup> Fewer than 60 percent of workers qualify for job-protected, unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and workers of color, low-wage workers, and single parents are disproportionately excluded.<sup>6</sup> People of color and with lower incomes are also disproportionately impacted by many of the diseases our groups represent – meaning the very patients who are more likely to need to use paid family and medical leave are the ones least likely to have access to it.

**Patients and Caregivers for Paid Leave** urges Congress to enact a national paid family and medical leave program that:

- Includes paid leave for patients and caregivers;
- Is adequately and sustainably funded; and
- Is authorized and funded beyond the short term so seriously ill patients and their caregivers are able to rely on the program to access needed care on an ongoing basis, for a meaningful number of weeks or intermittently when they need it.

**The time is now: Congress must pass national paid family and medical leave**

**Members of Patients and Caregivers for Paid Leave:**



<sup>1</sup> Veenstra CM, Regenbogen SE, Hawley ST, Abrahamse P, Banerjee M, Morris AM. Association of Paid Sick Leave With Job Retention and Financial Burden Among Working Patients With Colorectal Cancer. *JAMA*. 2015 Dec 22 29;314(24):2688-90. doi: 10.1001/jama.2015.12383. PubMed PMID: 26717032.

<sup>2</sup> Veenstra, C.M., Abrahamse, P., Wagner, T.H., Hawley, S.T., Banerjee, M. & Morris, A.M. (2018). Employment Benefits and Job Retention: Evidence Among Patients With Colorectal Cancer. *Cancer Med*. 2018 Mar; 7(3): 736–745. doi: 10.1002/cam4.1371.

<sup>3</sup> ACS CAN. Paid Leave is an Important Component of Cancer Care for Working Patients, Survivors and Caregivers. October 23, 2020.

<https://www.fightcancer.org/sites/default/files/Paid%20Leave%20External%20Factsheet%20Final%2010-23-20.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Table 31. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2020. September 2020. Bulletin 2793. <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2020/employee-benefits-in-the-united-states-march-2020.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Table 16. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2020. September 2020. Bulletin 2793. <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2020/employee-benefits-in-the-united-states-march-2020.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Abt Associates, prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor. Employee and Worksite Perspectives of the Family and Medical Leave Act: Results from the 2018 Surveys. July 2020.

[https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/WHD\\_FMLA2018SurveyResults\\_FinalReport\\_Aug2020.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/WHD_FMLA2018SurveyResults_FinalReport_Aug2020.pdf)