

Pass HB 200 & SB 906: Establish a Paid Family and Medical Leave Program to Ensure All Pennsylvanians Can Access to the Quality Care they Need

How Cancer Impacts Pennsylvania's Workforce

It is estimated that in 2026 alone, 90,250 Pennsylvanians will be diagnosed with cancer and 27,630 are expected to die from the diseaseⁱ. We know that cancer treatment is costly and time-consuming, impacting the majority of Pennsylvania families. Cancer patients and their caregivers often miss work due to:

- Ongoing doctors' visits throughout treatment
- Chemotherapy, radiation and/or surgery
- Time needed to recover from symptoms or effects of treatment

Between 2017 and 2019, ACS CAN conducted multiple surveys to explore the issue of paid leave among cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers. Most respondents reported facing a financial burden due to a lack of paid leave. Fifty percent of cancer patients, 34% of cancer survivors, and 48% of caregivers reported financial problems after missing work or reducing work hours to access treatment or tend to their loved ones.ⁱⁱ

On the other hand, individuals with paid family and medical leave were less likely to report experiencing financial problems while seeking cancer treatment. Additionally, studies show that cancer patients who have paid leave have higher rates of job retention.ⁱⁱⁱ

Access to Paid Leave = Better Health Outcomes

Access to paid family and medical leave makes a critical difference for people facing a cancer diagnosis – leading to improved outcomes and better quality of life. Respondents who used paid leave were nearly 50% more likely to complete their treatment, 46% more likely to attend doctor or treatment appointments, and 43% more likely to manage their symptoms or side effects.

% Positive Impact – Used/Didn't Use Paid Medical/Family Leave	Patients/Survivors	
	Have Paid Leave & Used It (27%)	Have Paid Leave But Didn't Use It (24%)
Being able to complete your treatment	80%	34%
Your doctor or treatment appointments	77%	31%
Managing your symptoms or side effects	70%	27%
The decisions you made about which treatments to receive or where to receive them	66%	23%
Affording your treatments	64%	22%
The number of different treatment options to which you had access	63%	21%

Investment in All Communities

No one should have to forego lifesaving treatment because they are worried they will lose their job and ability to afford their basic needs. Paid family and medical leave must be accessible for all communities. We see this as an opportunity to ensure there is equitable care across Pennsylvania. However, this is not the current status quo.

ACS CAN surveys found that those with lower levels of education and income, and those working in smaller companies (fewer than 100 employees) were less likely to report having access to paid family and medical leave. This was true for cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers.

Respondents who reported having issues with their job due to treatment or caregiving – including the quality of their work suffering, having to take one or more days off in a row, or having to leave work early – were most often those in lower income households, those with lower levels of education, younger respondents, and those working in smaller companies.

What This Legislation Would Do:

The Pennsylvania Family Care Act would:

- Establish a Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance program for all Pennsylvanian workers
- Allow employees to care for themselves or a loved one during a serious illness like cancer
- Establish up to 12* weeks of paid leave for eligible workers directly impacted by or caring for a family member with cancer
 - *SB 906 includes 20 weeks of leave for individuals with serious illness and 12 for their caregivers
- Provide safe leave for victims of violence
- Enable new parents to bond with their child following childbirth, adoption, or a foster placement
- Support military families in tending to needs related to military deployment

Recommendation

ACS CAN urges the Pennsylvania legislature to support the Family Care Act (HB 200/SB 906) so that Pennsylvanians can access the quality care they need, without fear of impacting their employment. It is a necessary step for our state to ensure that cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers can have the best health outcomes and quality of life possible. HB 200 passed the House in March 2026. We urge the Senate to pass this legislation next.

ⁱ American Cancer Society. *Cancer Facts & Figures 2025*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2025.

ⁱⁱ Public Opinion Strategies. Key Findings – National Survey of Cancer Patients, Survivors and Caregivers. December 8, 2017.

<https://www.fightcancer.org/sites/default/files/ACS%20CAN%20Paid%20Leave%20Surveys%20Key%20Findings%20Press%20Memo%20FINAL.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ 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.