

Paid Sick Days Are Needed for Caregivers

Millions of working people provide care for ill and aging family members—and need time away from work to do so.

- A third of workers, both women and men, report they have cared for an older relative in the past year.¹
- 44 million adults over age 18 provide support to older people and adults with disabilities who live in their communities.²

As our population ages, even more workers will need time off from work to care for aging family members.

- The population of adults age 65 and older will double during the next 25 years.
- By 2030, there will be 71 million older adults, accounting for roughly 20% of the U.S. population.³
- Half of the labor force will be caregivers by 2012.⁴

Nearly 58 million working-age adults reported having at least one of seven major chronic conditions in 2006—an increase of 25% from 1997—and will need care.

- This increase reflects rising rates of chronic disease prevalence among nonelderly adults, as well as an overall increase in the adult population.⁵
- Older adults are more likely to have more than one chronic condition:
 - 91% of adults over age 65 are living with at least one chronic condition, and 77% have at least two.
 - 77% of adults 55-64 are living with at least one chronic condition, and 57% have at least two.⁶
- As more people live longer, and face more chronic conditions, the caregiving responsibilities for workers increase.

Working people need a basic workplace standard of paid sick days so they don't have to choose between their job and economic security, or caring for an ill parent or elderly relative.

- Currently, no state or federal law guarantees paid sick days—although paid sick days campaigns in over a dozen states across the country are mobilizing in support of this basic workplace standard.
- Paid sick days legislation, like the federal Healthy Families Act (S 1152/HR 2460), would guarantee workers seven paid sick days a year to recover from their own illness, care for a sick family member or attend diagnostic and medical appointments.

¹ Families and Work Institute, Highlights of the 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce, 2002.

² Family Caregiver's Alliance: Caregiving and Retirement: What Happens to Family Caregivers Who Leave the Workforce (2003).

³ The State of Aging and Health in America 2007, CDC/Merck Company.

⁴ AARP, How Employers Can Support Working Caregivers, www.aarp.org/states/nd/articles/how_employers_can_support_working_caregivers_1.html, 7/20/07.

⁵ Eroding Access among Nonelderly Adults with Chronic Conditions: Ten Years of Change, (Kaiser Family Foundation) (2008).

⁶ Machlin, S, Cohen, J, Beauregard, K. Health Care Expenses for Adults with Chronic Conditions, 2005.