

Paid Sick Days Are Necessary To Manage Chronic Illness

Nearly half of all people in the U.S. have a chronic condition requiring regular care.¹

- Almost 58 million working-age adults reported having at least one chronic condition in 2006, an increase of 25% from 1997. This increase reflects rising rates of chronic disease prevalence among nonelderly adults, as well as an overall increase in the adult population.²
- Older adults are more likely to have more than one chronic condition:
 - 91% of adults over 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.³

As people live longer and face more chronic conditions, workers' need access to paid sick days to care for their own health or the health of family members.

- Many chronic conditions require regular medical treatment and monitoring, and thus, regular time away from work.
- When workers do not have paid sick days to access chronic care, they may forego preventive care, resulting in more costly care in the long term.

Paid sick days reduce health care costs associated with chronic conditions by enabling working people to access necessary preventive care.

- More than three in four health care dollars (78%) are spent on behalf of people with chronic conditions.⁴
- Preventive care is critical for preventing and managing chronic illness. People with chronic illnesses, such as asthma, hypertension and diabetes, may avoid hospitalization by managing their health through outpatient care,⁵ reducing health care costs.
- Paid sick days enable workers to take the time off they need for preventive and diagnostic care. This, in turn, reduces health care costs associated with chronic conditions by reducing preventable hospitalizations. A single hospitalization for asthma, which is largely preventable with appropriate preventive care, costs over \$13,000.⁶

When workers have paid sick days, they are able to take the necessary time off to care for their own chronic illness or for family members with chronic illness.

- 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.
- The federal Healthy Families Act (S 1152/HR 2460) would guarantee workers seven paid sick days a year to care for their own chronic condition or the health of a family member.

¹ Chronic Care in America: A 21st Century Challenge, a study of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation & Partnership for Solutions: Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (September 2004 Update). "Chronic Conditions: Making the Case for Ongoing Care".

² Eroding Access among Nonelderly Adults with Chronic Conditions: Ten Years of Change, (Kaiser Family Foundation) (2008).

³ Machlin, S, Cohen, J, Bearegard, K. Health Care Expenses for Adults with Chronic Conditions, 2005.

⁴ The Growing Burden of Chronic Disease in America, Public Health Reports, May/June 2004 Volume 119 Gerard Anderson, PhD

⁵ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, *Preventable Hospitalizations: Window Into Primary and Preventive Care*, 2000.

⁶ Bhatia, R, Testimony on the Healthy Families, Healthy Workplaces Act, Assembly Bill 2716 (Ma), California Assembly Labor Committee, April 9, 2008.