

# An Act Establishing Paid Sick Days, H1398, S930

Rep. Kay Khan and Sen. Pat Jehlen, Lead Sponsors

*Saving Money and Reducing the Spread of Disease*

Almost **1 million Massachusetts private sector workers** (over one-third of all such workers) lack a single guaranteed paid sick day.

More than half of Massachusetts private sector workers cannot take any sick time to care for a sick child or elderly parent.

Nearly 50% of all emergency room visits in Massachusetts could be prevented by improving access to primary care.<sup>1</sup>

## **PAID SICK DAYS WILL SAVE THE COMMONWEALTH MONEY BY:**

- Reducing preventable emergency room visits.<sup>2</sup>
- Reducing health care costs related to the spread of highly contagious diseases.
- Keeping low-wage workers employed and off of public assistance.
- Reducing the increased health care costs attributable to highly stressed workers.<sup>3</sup>

## **PAID SICK DAYS WILL SAVE BUSINESS MONEY BY:**

- Reducing employee turnover, contagion and lost productivity – a \$348 million annual benefit to Massachusetts employers.<sup>4</sup>
- Reducing on the job injuries directly caused by presenteeism, a phenomenon that describes employees who work while sick.<sup>5</sup>
- Reducing the spread of the flu, a contagious illness that accounts for 10-12% of all illness-related workplace absences.

## **PAID SICK DAYS WILL PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH BY:**

- Preventing over 33,000 flu infections in the workplace, saving workers and their families more than \$16 million in lost wages and medical costs.<sup>6</sup>
- Preventing food and beverage contamination.
- Preventing the spread of illnesses in daycare and school environments.

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<sup>1</sup> Human Impact Partners, *A Health Impact Assessment of the Healthy Families Act of 2009: Massachusetts Addendum – A Health Impact Assessment of An Act Establishing Paid Sick Days*, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Institute for Women's Policy Research, *Paid Sick Days in Massachusetts: Containing Health Care Costs Through Prevention and Timely Treatment*, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> CLASP, *Responsive Workplaces: The business case for employment that values fairness and families*, CLASP, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Institute for Women's Policy Research, *Valuing Good Health in Massachusetts: The Costs and Benefits of Paid Sick Days*, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Institute for Women's Policy Research, *Paid Sick Days in Massachusetts: Containing Health Care Costs Through Prevention and Timely Treatment*, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

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## KEY PROVISIONS OF THE PAID SICK DAYS ACT

All employees earn up to 7 paid sick days per year, at the rate of 1 hour for every 30 hours worked.

All employers (public and private) are covered by the bill. Employers offering more generous benefits will not have to modify their plans.

Employees may use leave for:

- Illness, injury or health condition that requires staying home, or professional medical care.
- Attending routine medical appointments.
- Absences for domestic violence victims.

Paid sick days may be used by employees for themselves or to care for their child, spouse, parent or parent of spouse.

## THIS BILL IS DESIGNED TO BALANCE EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE NEEDS:

Employers may require medical certification for any absence that exceeds 3 consecutive days.

Employers are not required to provide more than 7 paid sick days in any given year.

Employees cannot cash out unused days upon separation from employment or extended leave.

Unused sick days can be carried over at the end of a year, but an employee cannot accumulate more than 7 paid sick days in any given year, unless an employer provides otherwise.

Employers who offer 20 or more days of combined sick, vacation and personal days do not have to change their policies.

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