

Pass HB 181/SB 580: Establish a Paid Family and Medical Leave Program to Ensure that All Pennsylvanians Can Access the Quality Care they Need

How Cancer Impacts Pennsylvania’s Workforce

It is estimated that in 2024 alone, 89,400 Pennsylvanians will be diagnosed with cancerⁱ. We know that cancer treatment is costly and time consuming. 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. The majority of 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 that 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

Paid family and medical leave must be accessible for all communities, and 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 would HB 181/SB 580 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
- 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 their needs related to military deployments

Recommendation

ACS CAN urges the Pennsylvania legislature to support the Family Care Act —HB 181 and SB 580— so that Pennsylvanians can access the quality care they need, without fear of impacting their employment. It is a necessary step forward for our state to make sure that cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers can have the best health outcomes and quality of life possible.

ⁱ American Cancer Society. *Cancer Facts & Figures 2024*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2024.

ⁱⁱ See 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.