

PAID FAMILY LEAVE

ISSUE: Currently, the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) requires employers to provide up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave to employees for time off due to the employee's own serious health condition, to care for a family member with a serious health condition, or to care for a newborn or adopted child. Hospitals strive to ensure that their employees can achieve a balance between the demands of work and family life. We have long supported the compassionate work of our caregivers and we are committed to providing them with every protection afforded them under the law so that they may continue to support the mission of their hospital.

Legislation (S. 910) has recently been introduced which would require employers to provide an additional 7 days of paid sick leave each year. The paid sick leave benefit would be available for an absence resulting from the employee's or family member's illness, injury, or medical condition as well as time off required to obtain a medical diagnosis or preventative medical care. S. 910 would create another category of protected leave, precluding discipline for such absences. While hospitals recognize the demands faced by employees, support preventative health care and strive to provide employees with needed time-off, hospitals have an obligation to provide quality patient care. This requires that hospitals maintain the ability to schedule employees as needed and to minimize unscheduled absences. S. 910 would adversely impact a hospital's ability to provide quality patient care.

POSITION: ASHHRA opposes S. 910.

- While we fundamentally support Congress' original intent to provide opportunities for employees to address the pressures of balancing work and family obligations, we believe it is premature to expand the scope of the program.
- Since its enactment, the FMLA and its implementing regulations have presented a compliance nightmare for hospitals already burdened by paperwork. These interpretations are often conflicting and have the potential to adversely affect patient care.

<p>The American Society for Healthcare Human resources Administration (ASHHRA) is the nation's only personal membership group dedicated to meeting the professional needs of human resources professionals in hospitals and healthcare organizations. ASHHRA is a Personal Membership Group of the American Hospital Association and a joint membership partner with the Society for Human Resources Management. For information about ASHHRA, please contact Suzanne Graham, Project Assistant, at (312) 422-3724.</p>
