

Portland, Maine



Yes. Life's good here.

Office of the Mayor, Ethan K. Strimling

Portland Earned Paid Sick Time Ordinance

The Problem

It is estimated that thousands of workers in Portland do not currently earn a single paid day off to care for their own medical well being, ensure their physical safety, or to care for the health of their child.¹ This leads to greater public health risks,² increased health care costs³ and greater economic instability for many of our neighbors who must choose between health and income.

The Solution

Healthy and safe workplaces are critical to Portland's public viability, therefore *The Portland Earned Paid Sick and Safe Time Ordinance* [EPST] will ensure that all employees working in Portland accrue a minimum of one hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked (up to a maximum of six days a year). If a current employer already provides this amount of sick time (or PTO), they will not be impacted by this provision.

How it will work

The policy is designed to promote public health and support our workers, while balancing employers' needs to meet customer expectations. It is modeled after the laws that have been successfully enacted in other jurisdictions. Attached is the full ordinance for review; however, the highlights are:

Uses

- EPST may be used for an employee's mental or physical health, injury, diagnosis, prevention or condition including absence due to domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. It may also be used for the care of a family member or to attend a meeting at a place where a family member is receiving care.

¹ Statewide data puts the number of workers with no earned sick time at 198,000: Institute for Women's Policy Research & National Partnership for Women & Families (2015, May). Portland accounts for 12% of the statewide workforce, meaning we likely have over 20,000 workers with no earned sick time.

² Nationally we know that parents without sick time are twice as likely to send a sick child to school.
http://www.epi.org/publication/the_need_for_paid_sick_days/

³ Ibid. (Nationally we know that parents without sick time are five times as likely to take their child to an emergency room because they are unable to go to the doctor during work hours.)

Public Health Impact

According to City of Portland Staff, "There are a number of studies showing that paid sick leave leads to increased utilization of preventive services and decreased spread of infectious diseases, including the flu." A few of the findings include(see attached memo from Julie Sullivan):

- Lack of access to paid sick leave results in the spread of infectious diseases, as well as delayed screenings, diagnoses, and treatment.⁴ (American Medical Association)
- Studies indicate that paid sick leave has positive health and economic impacts on communities.⁵ (Human Impact Partners)
- Paid sick leave can reduce employers' overall costs while simultaneously contributing to community health.⁶ (US Congress)

Economic Impact

EPST laws have been on the books for a decade showing no measurable negative economic impacts. A couple of highlights are:

- Seven years after San Francisco implemented EPST that required all businesses to provide sick time to all workers, the SF Chamber of Commerce stated that the impact on employers has been "...minimal...By and large this has not been an employer issue."⁷
- According to a 2014 study of Connecticut's statewide EPST law, a survey of employers found that the law had little impact on costs and that a majority of businesses have not increased prices or reduced employee hours because of the law. Additionally, the same survey reported that the law improved employee productivity.⁸

Public Support

A recent survey by Public Policy Polling showed that 67% of people in Portland support requiring earned sick time, including 75% of women, 70% of seniors and 61% of people who live off the Peninsula. Only 25% of Portland residents do not support requiring employers to provide sick time and 8% are undecided.⁹

⁴ American Medical Association. (June 2016). "AMA Recognizes Public Health Benefits of Paid Sick Leave."
<https://www.ama-assn.org/ama-recognizes-public-health-benefits-paid-sick-leave>

⁵ Human Impact Partners and San Francisco Dept of Public Health. (2009).
<http://www.humanimpact.org/projects/hia-case-stories/paid-sick-days-hias/>

⁶ U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee. (March 2010).
<https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/cache/files/abf8aca7-6b94-4152-b720-2d8d04b81ed6/sickleave-report-final.pdf>

⁷ Jim Lazarus, Sr. VP for Policy, SF Chamber of Commerce, New York Time, January 27, 2014

⁸ Appelbaum, E., & Milkman, R (2014, January 6)

⁹ <http://progressiveportland.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/PortlandResultsSickLeave-with-tabs.pdf>



Executive Department
Julie Sullivan
Senior Advisor to the City Manager

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Jon Jennings, City Manager
FROM: Julie Sullivan
DATE: August 24, 2017
RE: Paid sick leave and improved community health

As requested, I researched whether paid sick leave policies contribute to improved community health. There are a number of studies showing that paid sick leave leads to increased utilization of preventive services and decreased spread of infectious diseases, including the flu. Evidence also shows that paid sick leave laws address the disproportionate impact on lower-income jobs, who are most likely to work for employers who do not offer such a policy. The opposition to paid sick leave appears to come solely from business organizations who state that increased regulation is bad for their bottom line. Other than that type of argument, I did not find any data showing that paid sick leave does not contribute to improved public health.

There are numerous additional sources I could cite if that would be helpful.

- Studies indicate that paid sick leave has positive health and economic impacts on communities. (Human Impact Partners)
- People without paid sick leave were 3.0 times more likely to forgo medical care for themselves, and 1.6 times more likely to forgo medical for their family. (Health Affairs, March 2016)
- Paid sick leave can reduce employers' overall costs while simultaneously contributing to community health. (US Congress, Joint Economic Committee)
- A large study found that regardless of socioeconomic factors, workers who lack paid sick leave were significantly less likely to have received preventive health care screenings in the last 12 months, even among those previously told they have a condition like diabetes or cardiovascular disease that places them at higher risk. (Preventive Medicine, March 2017)
- The American Medical Association cited lack of access to paid sick leave results in the spread of infectious diseases, as well as delayed screenings, diagnoses, and treatment (AMA, 2016).
- In a national survey of more than 4,300 restaurant workers, 88% reported not having paid sick leave, and consequently 63% admitted that they cooked and served food while ill. (APHA, 2013) The US Department of Labor reports that 55% of workers who do not receive paid sick leave say they go to work while contagious. Perhaps more concerning, 12% of

restaurant works report showing up to work while vomiting or suffering diarrhea because they don't have paid sick leave.

Bibliography

American Medical Association. (June 2016). "AMA Recognizes Public Health Benefits of Paid Sick Leave." <https://www.ama-assn.org/ama-recognizes-public-health-benefits-paid-sick-leave>

Health Affairs. (March 2016). "Workers Without Paid Sick Leave Less Likely to Take Time Off for Illness or Injury Compared to Those With Paid Sick Leave." <http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/35/3/520.abstract>

Human Impact Partners and San Francisco Dept of Public Health. (2009). A Health Impact Assessment of the Healthy Families Act of 2009. Oakland, CA: Human Impact Partners. <http://www.humanimpact.org/projects/hia-case-stories/paid-sick-days-hias/>

National Partnership for Women and Families. (2012). "Paid Sick Days: Good for Businesses, Good for Workers" fact sheet. <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/psd/paid-sick-days-good-for-business-and-workers.pdf>

Preventive Medicine. (March 2017) "Paid Sick Leave and Preventive Health Care Service Use Among U.S. Working Adults." <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0091743517300440>

U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee. (March 2010). Expanding Access to Paid Sick Leave: The Impact of the Healthy Families Act on America's Workers. Washington, DC: U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee. <https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/cache/files/abf8aca7-6b94-4152-b720-2d8d04b81ed6/sickleavereportfinal.pdf>

Vermont Dept of Public Health. (Feb 2015) <https://vtpha.org/file-downloads/paid-sick-leave.pdf>