

Paid family leave and health

NARRATIVES AND HEALTH EQUITY: EXPANDING THE CONVERSATION

Paid family leave helps individuals and families manage the many competing demands of life, and prevents parents from having to make impossible decisions between keeping their jobs and taking care of their family. The emerging narrative emphasizes the health benefits of paid family leave for children, parents, and communities, and helps to promote paid family leave policies in both the government and private sectors.

1. To be healthy, everyone needs the security of a steady income to provide for their daily and future needs.
2. When everyone in a community has stable employment and financial security, everyone's health benefits from the increased sense of permanence, safety, and interconnectedness in the community.
 - a. Job stability allows individuals and families to plan and care for their own and each other's health.
 - b. Financial security assures that no one has to choose between regular income and their own or a family member's health.
 - c. Stress is a significant negative influence on health. Stable employment and financial security reduce stress and improve the health of individuals and communities by assuring that people have flexibility to care for one another without jeopardizing their livelihoods.
 - d. Creating the conditions that assure health through job stability and financial security is the responsibility of all parts of the community.
3. Structural racism has created inequities in employment opportunities, employment stability, and financial security for American Indians and people of African, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern descent.
 - a. People of color and American Indians are more likely to be in low-paying, less secure jobs with few benefits, such as access to paid sick leave or paid family leave, than white persons.
 - b. Policies that promote job stability and financial security can improve health outcomes in communities that have concentrations of lower wage workers.
 - c. Policies that promote job stability and financial security also promote health equity by improving conditions the most for the most economically disadvantaged, including American Indians, people of African, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern descent.
4. Policies that promote job stability and financial security give families and communities more flexibility to care for one another and support cultural values of giving loving care throughout life, from beginning to end.
 - a. Every person deserves loving care. Families should be able to care for their loved ones when they are needed.

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- b. Every child deserves the healthy start provided through the loving care of their family in the first weeks of life. Early bonding, breastfeeding, and maternal well-being have positive and lasting effects on the health of children.
 - c. Women should be able to care for their children and families without jeopardizing their financial futures. Many women experience instability in employment and insecure financial positions because they typically bear the greatest burden of family caregiving and are more likely to put their careers on hold to care for family members.
5. Employment stability and financial security increase the ability of individuals and families to manage the challenges of life. Communities are healthier when everyone has a range of options available to meet the needs of themselves and their families.
 - a. Communities are healthier when people can care for one another.
 - b. Policies such as paid family leave increase the ability of family members to care for one another without the worry of job loss; reduce the isolation of caregivers and recipients (such as the elderly); and increase the potential for mutual support among caregivers.
6. Every sector shares the responsibility for the health of the community by taking steps to assure that people do not have to make impossible choices between their personal lives and their jobs.
 - a. Businesses benefit from the improved physical and mental health, lower absenteeism, and continuity of work associated with policies that support job stability and financial security, such as paid leave.
 - b. Providing paid family leave across the spectrum of occupations improves the economic strength of the whole community.
 - c. Informal, family-based care provides both enormous economic and social benefits to the entire community.
7. When individuals and families have job stability and the financial security provided by policies such as having paid sick leave or paid family leave, they are more likely to stay home from work when they or their children are sick, reducing the spread of infectious disease and protecting both businesses and people.

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