

## The Healthy Families Act:

### A Basic Workplace Standard of Paid Sick Days

#### Background

**Nearly half (48%) of private-sector workers don't have a single paid sick day to care for themselves when they are ill.** Although a dozen states around the country are considering paid sick days initiatives this year, currently, no state or federal law guarantees paid sick days. **Congress should pass the Healthy Families Act and establish a basic workplace standard of paid sick days so that workers aren't forced to risk their jobs or paychecks to care for their health.**

The Healthy Families Act would guarantee workers up to seven paid sick days a year to recover from their own illness or to care for a sick family member, and provides paid sick time for diagnostic and medical appointments. It would also allow workers to use paid sick time to recover from or seek assistance related to an incidence of domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault.

- **Those most in need are the least likely to have paid sick days.** Only one in four low-wage workers have paid sick days, and they are often most likely to have jobs requiring frequent contact with the public.
- **When people have no choice but to go to work sick, they risk infecting others.** For example, only one in five food service or hotel workers have any paid sick days. Child care, retail and nursing home workers are also less likely to have paid sick days.
- **Children get well faster when a parent cares for them.** Yet, 94 million working people don't have paid sick days to care for an ill child—and cannot afford to take time off without pay. As a result, children are forced to go to school sick.
- **Working people with paid sick days are more productive and less likely to leave their job,** which saves businesses money by reducing turnover. If workers were provided just seven paid sick days per year, our national economy would experience a net savings of \$8.1 billion per year.
- **Paid time off to address the effects of domestic violence helps victims keep their jobs and maintain their financial stability.** According to the General Accounting Office, 25 to 50 percent of domestic violence victims report losing a job due, at least in part, to domestic violence.

#### Healthy Families Act Details

- **Number of sick days:** Provides workers with up to seven job-protected paid sick days each year.
- **Simplified method by which paid sick days are accrued** for both employers and employees. Allows workers to earn a minimum of one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked, up to 56 hours (seven days) per year, unless the employer selects a higher limit.
- **Usage:** Can be used to care for worker's own illness, preventative care or to provide care for a sick family member. **Domestic violence provision** allows workers to use paid sick time to recover from or seek assistance related to an incidence of domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault.
- **Employer coverage:** Employers with fewer than 15 workers are exempt.
- **Employer certification:** Employer may require certification if the employee uses more than three paid sick days in a row. For victims of domestic violence, the certification may be from a law enforcement officer or victim advocate
- **Existing employer policies:** Employers with existing paid sick days policies that meet the minimums set in the Healthy Families Act (for time, types of use, method of use) are not affected.