



Many Colorado Workers Lack Paid Sick Days

Only **57 percent** of workers in Colorado have paid sick days, according to an analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.¹ This leaves **43 percent, or 978,817 workers**, without a sickness policy allowing them to stay home with pay when they're sick.²

A modest plan ensuring a minimum paid sick days standard in Colorado would save **\$11.31** per worker per week.³ These savings would come from reduced turnover, lower productivity losses for sick workers on the job, avoiding relatives' short-term nursing home stays, and a healthier workforce. Costs for wages, payroll taxes, and administrative expenses would be much lower: **\$8.06** per worker per week.

Nationally, 30 percent of workers have paid sick days for staying home with ill children, and 33 percent are covered by paid sick days when they go to the doctor.⁴ Low-wage workers have the least access to paid sick days, with only 27 percent covered. Certain industries have exceptionally poor paid sick days policies, such as restaurants (14 percent of workers have access to paid sick days).⁵

¹ Analysis using the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) Paid Sick Days Estimator, http://paysickdays.nationalpartnership.org/site/DocServer/IWPR_Guide_to_Downloading_Data09.pdf?docID=1281. The Estimator uses IWPR analysis of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' March 2006 National Compensation Survey (Hartmann, Heidi. 2007. The Healthy Families Act: Impacts on workers, businesses, the economy and public health. Testimony on the Healthy Families Act: Safeguarding Americans' Livelihood, Families and Health with Paid Sick Days before the U. S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/Hartmann_HFA_testimony021307.pdf (Accessed February 17, 2009)), adjusted for eligibility with data from the November 2005 through October 2006 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, to calculate the percent of workers, by industry, lacking paid sick days at the national level. Data on the number of workers in Colorado, by industry, are from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (downloaded from <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/dsrv?en>).

² Workers with a paid time off (PTO) program that can be used for sickness are included as having a paid sick days policy.

³ In 2010 dollars. Based on IWPR's report *Valuing Good Health: An Estimate of Costs and Savings for the Healthy Families Act* (Vicky Lovell, 2005), adjusted to reflect Colorado's average weekly wage as reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (downloaded from <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/dsrv?en>). This proposal would ensure that all those working 20 or more hours a week for employers of 15 or more workers be granted at least seven days of paid sick leave annually, with the leave usable for the worker's own preventive care or sickness absence and for time off to care for family members.

⁴ Vicky Lovell, *No Time To Be Sick: Why Everyone Suffers When Workers Don't Have Paid Sick Leave* (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2004).

⁵ Heidi Hartmann. 2007. The Healthy Families Act: Impacts on workers, businesses, the economy and public health. Testimony on the Healthy Families Act: Safeguarding Americans' Livelihood, Families and Health with Paid Sick Days before the U. S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/Hartmann_HFA_testimony021307.pdf (Accessed February 17, 2009).