



April 4, 2018

The Honorable Virginia Foxx  
Chairwoman  
House Education and the Workforce Committee  
2176 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman, Senate Committee on  
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bobby Scott  
Ranking Member  
House Education and the Workforce Committee  
2101 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on  
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
648 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents 129,000 physicians and medical students across the country, I write to advocate in support of paid sick leave legislation. The vision of the AAFP is to transform health care to achieve optimal health for everyone, and research has shown that employees without paid sick leave were more likely to go to work when ill and even forgo care than those who had paid sick leave. Congress should enact paid sick leave to benefit American workers, their families and the public health.

In March 2016 Health Affairs published a [study](#) entitled "Workers Without Paid Sick Leave Less Likely To Take Time Off For Illness Or Injury Compared To Those With Paid Sick Leave." The authors found that without paid sick leave both full- and part-time workers were less likely to take time off when injured or sick and more likely to skip or delay treatment for themselves or a family member than were workers with paid sick leave. When working people feel compelled to work despite illness, they risk infecting others or becoming sicker by delaying care. Paid sick leave would allow workers to avoid spreading infection to coworkers, customers and others in their communities.

There are too many workers who do not have access to paid sick leave. The National Compensation Survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) produces data on availability of sick leave and other disability benefits as part of the benefits survey. For all workers in March 2017, 72 percent of civilian workers had access to paid sick leave. That figure breaks down to include 91 percent of state and local government workers and 68 percent of private industry having access to paid sick leave.

The American Academy of Family Physicians offers employees paid sick leave based on scheduled full-time equivalency. Full-time AAFP employees accrue paid sick leave at a rate of 3.25 hours earned per pay period. The AAFP also provides an incentive for staff members who do not use their

[www.aafp.org](http://www.aafp.org)

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sick leave. On January 1 of each year, one-half of the staff member's unused sick leave accrual from the previous year is credited as earned vacation. The remaining unused sick leave is carried forward as accumulated sick leave for use in future years.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments on the need for paid sick leave. Please contact Teresa Baker, Senior Government Relations Representative, at 202-232-9033 or [tbaker@aafp.org](mailto:tbaker@aafp.org) for any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Meigs, Jr., MD, FAAFP". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "MD" and "FAAHP" written in a smaller, more formal script at the end.

John Meigs, Jr., MD, FAAFP  
Board Chair

### **About Family Medicine**

Family physicians conduct approximately one in five of the total medical office visits in the United States per year – more than any other specialty. Family physicians provide comprehensive, evidence-based, and cost-effective care dedicated to improving the health of patients, families and communities. Family medicine's cornerstone is an ongoing and personal patient-physician relationship where the family physician serves as the hub of each patient's integrated care team. More Americans depend on family physicians than on any other medical specialty.