



Leave benefits expand to adapt to an aging workforce

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With baby boomers making up a growing portion of the workforce, employers are seeing an increased need to provide time off for employees to care for older family members. Leave benefits continue to expand as businesses move toward more family-friendly workplaces to help retain valuable employees and maintain job satisfaction.

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) generally includes 12 weeks of unpaid time off for eligible employees after the birth of a child, the placement of a child for adoption or foster care, and to care for a parent, child or spouse with a serious health condition or for the employee's own serious health condition. Beyond FMLA benefits, some states have expanded their family leave laws to include grandparents, aunts and uncles.


As we mentioned in our last issue of the *edge*, there are no federal mandates related to paid parental, bonding and family leave for employers. Most employers have the ability to design a program to meet the needs of their employees, while aligning with business requirements and helping them stay competitive with the benefits offered by other organizations. A growing number of laws have been added or expanded at the state and local level. For example, New Jersey, Rhode Island, California and most recently New York (effective January 1, 2018) have passed paid family leave laws. In addition, some states and municipalities are requiring paid sick leave that provides paid time off for short durations to care for family members. There are currently 40+ states or municipalities that require employers to provide some type of paid sick leave to care for family members.



SOME STATES AND EMPLOYERS NOW OFFER TIME OFF FOR EMPLOYEES TO CARE FOR THEIR GRANDPARENTS, MOTHER-IN-LAW, FATHER-IN-LAW, AUNTS AND UNCLAS.

AUNT DEBBIE, GRANDMA AND JOEY, 1970

Similar to the increasing number of employers offering paid parental leave, we are seeing more states and employers offering time off for employees to care for older relatives. Washington D.C., Hawaii and Oregon laws include time off to care for grandparents. Some states also include the employee's mother-in-law, father-in-law, aunts and uncles.



Offering expanded leave of absence benefits for family caregivers can have a positive impact on employees' emotional and physical wellbeing.



According to Sedgwick's claims database, 64% of caregivers over 55 years old taking leave to care for a family member are female and 36% are male. It is not unexpected that more females are taking leave to care for a family member, but in the over-45 age group, there is an even greater difference in the number of male and female employees taking leave to care for a family member. For comparison, the percentage of employees who

take bonding leave after the birth of child or placement of a child for adoption or foster care is more evenly split between males and females in most age groups.

Offering expanded leave of absence benefits for family caregivers can have a positive impact on employees' emotional and physical wellbeing. In addition, the flexibility it offers directly correlates with a company's financial health and productivity. We help clients care for their employees who need to take a leave of absence by assisting with the process and making it easier for everyone.