



## Working Sick: Why California Workers Need Paid Sick Days Now

- Nearly 6 million working Californians – over 40% of all workers in the state – have ZERO paid sick days.
  - 76% of low-wage workers<sup>1</sup> have no paid sick days – they have no choice but to come to work sick and send their sick children to school or child care.
  - 60% of low-wage workers are women and the majority of women are primary caregivers for their families.<sup>2</sup>
- **The lack of paid sick days is a public health concern.**
  - Sick workers spread contagion to other workers.<sup>3</sup> Every ill worker with the flu infects 18% of his/her coworkers.<sup>4</sup>
  - Sick workers employed in the service industry, especially food and retail, risk spreading contagion to the public.
  - Sick workers are more likely to have an accident on the job.<sup>5</sup>
- **The lack of paid sick days hurts children and families.**
  - Children without a parent to stay home with them when they are sick score more poorly in school than children whose parents have paid sick days.
  - Sick children recuperate faster when cared for by their parents.
  - Half of all U.S. women forego pay when they stay home to take care of a sick child.<sup>6</sup>
  - 70% of caregivers for elderly relatives work full time – when a caregiver cannot take time off, the elderly relative may be forced to go into a nursing home.

## It's About Time: Support Paid Sick Days in California

Produced by the **Labor Project for Working Families** on behalf of the **Work and Family Coalition**. The Work and Family Coalition is a partnership of unions and community based organizations working on a campaign for Paid Sick Days in California to allow workers to take paid sick days for themselves or to care for a sick family member. The Coalition helped pass the groundbreaking California Paid Family Leave law. For more information, contact us at (510) 643-7088 or [info@paysickdaysca.org](mailto:info@paysickdaysca.org) or visit [www.paysickdaysCA.org](http://www.paysickdaysCA.org).

<sup>1</sup> Heymann J. (2000). *The Widening Gap: Why American's Working Families are in Jeopardy and What Can Be Done about It*. New York: Basic Books.

<sup>2</sup> Boushey, H. and J. Schmitt. (2005). *Impact of Proposed Minimum Wage Increase on Low-Income Families*. Center for Economic and Policy Research.

<sup>3</sup> Sorock, G.S., et al. (2004). "A case-crossover study of transient risk factors for occupational acute hand injury". *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. 61:305-311

<sup>4</sup> Institute for Women's Policy Research Fact Sheet, February 2006. "Paid Sick Days Improve Public Health by Reducing the Spread of Disease."

<sup>5</sup> See citation 3.

<sup>6</sup> Wyn, R., Et al. (2003). "Women, Work and Family Health: A Balancing Act?" The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.