

### Family and Medical Leave Insurance saves public funds

Washington state and local governments spend billions supporting the health and well-being of children, seniors, and families. Nearly half of births are covered by Medicaid and 12% of seniors are eligible for medical assistance. In fiscal year 2010, 114,000 children were in publicly subsidized childcare and 47,000 seniors received care support.<sup>1</sup>

*By providing partial wage replacement when workers must take leave to care for family or their own serious health condition, Family and Medical Leave Insurance lowers public costs and promotes:*

### Financial security for families

- **Fewer new parents will be forced on public assistance.** In 2008, 33% of Washington's new moms received state assistance, including 13% on cash assistance and 25% on basic food.<sup>2</sup> In states with family or disability insurance programs, just 10% of new mothers went on cash assistance (compared to 24% of new mothers in other states), and use of SNAP or food stamps dropped to 9% from 22%.<sup>3</sup>
- **Fewer infants will be in subsidized childcare.** Infant care is costly - \$910 per month at Washington daycare centers in 2011.
- **Women will earn more.** Women in states with family or disability insurance were more likely to return to work in the year following a birth, and to have higher wages over time.<sup>3</sup>
- **Caring for an aging parent will be less costly, for families and the state.** Our aging population means more people balancing work and care for parents or partners with a serious health condition.



### Healthier, thriving babies

- **Parents will have more time in the first precious weeks of life.** Women in family and disability leave states were twice as likely to take paid leave after having a baby than women in other states, and took leaves that averaged 22 days longer. California fathers doubled rates of paternity leave after paid family leave was implemented there - which helps keep dads involved in supporting their kids emotionally and economically long term.<sup>4</sup>
- **Babies will be born healthier.** Babies are less likely to be born prematurely, with low-birth-weight, or by C-section when the mother takes leave in the last weeks of pregnancy.<sup>5</sup>



## Healthier kids, ready for school

- **More babies will be breast fed longer.** Breast fed babies get sick less often, and later on have lower rates of obesity and other health complications. Mothers are more likely to establish and prolong breast feeding when they have paid leave from work.<sup>6</sup>
- **Kids will have stronger foundations.** Babies' brains grow and develop quickly. Quality nurture and bonding during the first weeks and months of life – with lots of cuddling, play, and verbal interaction – establish strong life-long foundations for the child's physical, social, intellectual, and emotional development.<sup>7</sup>



## Strengthening public health

- **Babies will get to the doctor.** When new parents have paid leave, babies more often get immunizations and other well-baby care.
- **Moms will be healthier.** Healthy moms help babies thrive. Longer maternity leave allows for full physical recovery and results in less postpartum depression for new moms.<sup>8</sup>
- **Hospital stays will be shorter – and follow-up care better.** When their parents are with them, hospitalized children have shorter stays (31% shorter in one study) and improved well-being. The presence of family members reduces the work load of hospital staff, improves follow-up care, and reduces complications for all age groups.<sup>9</sup>



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Washington Dept. of Social and Health Services, Client Data, <http://clientdata.rda.dshs.wa.gov/>; DSHS, Trends in Social Service Use, Washington State, for State Fiscal Year 2008, Table 1b, Nov 2011, <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ms/rda/research/3/35/0.pdf>; Washington Department of Health, 2008 births, [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov).

<sup>2</sup> Washington DSHS, Trends in Social Service Use, <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ms/rda/research/3/35/0.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> California, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Hawaii have temporary disability insurance programs covering all workers, funded through payroll taxes. California added family leave insurance in 2004 and New Jersey in 2009. Houser and Vartanian, "Policy Matters: Public Policy, Paid Leave for New Parents, and Economic Security for U.S. Workers," April 2012, Rutgers, [www.cww.rutgers.edu](http://www.cww.rutgers.edu); Rossin-Slater, Ruhn, Waldfogel, "The Effects of California's Paid Family Leave Program on Mothers' Leave-Taking and Subsequent Labor Market Outcomes," National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 17715, December 2011, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w17715>.

<sup>4</sup> "Policy Matters: Public Policy, Paid Leave for New Parents, and Economic Security for U.S. Workers," and "The Effects of California's Paid Family Leave Program on Mothers' Leave-Taking and Subsequent Labor Market Outcomes."

<sup>5</sup> Guendelman S, Pearl M, Graham S, Hubbard A, Hosang N, Kharrazi M, 2009: "Maternity leave in the ninth month of pregnancy and birth outcomes among working women," *Womens Health Issues*, 19(1):30-7, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19111785>

<sup>6</sup> Center for Disease Control, viewed March 6, 2012 at <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/index.htm>; Berger, Hill, and Waldfogel, (2005). Maternity Leave, Early Maternal Employment, and Child Health and Development in the U.S. *The Economic Journal* (115), F29-F47.

<sup>7</sup> Zero to Three, FAQ, Postnatal Development, viewed October 23, 2012, [http://main.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ter\\_key\\_brainFAQ#parentsrole](http://main.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ter_key_brainFAQ#parentsrole).

<sup>8</sup> Pat McGovern, et. al., 2006: "Postpartum Health of Employed Mothers 5 Weeks After Childbirth," *Analysis of Family Medicine* 10(2), 159-167.

<sup>9</sup> Taylor, O'Connor, 1989: "Resident Parents and Shorter Hospital Stays," *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, 64:274-276, <http://adc.bmi.com/content/64/2/274.full>; Palmer, 1993: "Care of Sick Children by Parents: A Meaningful Role," *J Advanced Nursing*, 18:185-191.