

# Executive Summary: Health Impact Review of SB 5459

## Implementing Family and Medical Leave Insurance

Evidence indicates that [SB 5459](#) has potential to improve financial security; to improve maternal, child, and family health; and to decrease health disparities by income, educational attainment, and race/ethnicity.

### BILL INFORMATION

**Sponsors:** Senators Keiser, Hasegawa, Conway, McCoy, Kohl-Welles, Chase

**Companion:** [HB 1273](#)

#### Summary of Bill:

- Requires employers to annually provide twelve weeks of family and medical leave insurance to eligible employees for the birth or placement of a child and for a family member's serious health condition, plus 12 weeks for the employee's own serious health condition.
- Establishes that in order to be eligible for family and medical leave insurance an employee must work 680 hours during the qualifying year.
- Decreases the job protection tenure and minimum hour requirements from 12 months to six months and from 1,250 hours to 650 hours in six months (rather than 12 months).
- Provides that an employee's weekly benefit will be calculated as a percentage of their total quarterly wages (5.2%) and that the maximum weekly benefit amount will be one thousand dollars (adjusted annually for inflation).
- Requires employers to pay a premium to the family and medical leave insurance account based on the amount of the employee's wages. Each employer may deduct from the pay of each individual one-half of the full amount that the employer is required to pay for an individual. These premiums will eventually be adjusted annually to ensure that they are the lowest rate necessary to maintain solvency of the program.
- Requires the Employment Security Department to implement an outreach program (with information available in English and other primary languages as defined by [RCW 74.04.025](#)) to ensure that eligible individuals are aware of the benefits.

### HEALTH IMPACT REVIEW

#### Summary of Findings:

This health impact review found the following evidence regarding the provisions in SB 5459:

- Strong evidence that employees use paid family and medical leave benefits when needed.
- Very strong evidence that paid leave for the birth or placement of a child is associated with improved maternal and child health outcomes and increased parental involvement.
- Strong evidence that paid medical leave to care for a family member's serious health condition is associated with improved health outcomes for employees and their families.
- The relationship between employees taking leave for their own serious health condition and their health outcomes has not been well researched (see the full health impact review for scenarios in which the evidence for this relationship may be stronger).
- Strong evidence that paid family and medical leave benefits improve financial security for eligible employees and their families.
- Very strong evidence that improved financial security is associated with improved health.
- Strong evidence that improved health outcomes for employees newly eligible for paid family and medical leave under SB 5459 would lead to decreased health disparities.

### FULL REVIEW

For review methods, logic model, strength-of-evidence analyses, and citations of empirical evidence refer to the full health impact review: <http://sboh.wa.gov/Portals/7/Doc/HealthImpactReviews/HIR-2015-10-SB5459.pdf>

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