

The Question of Paid Family or Medical Leave in Radiology



The issue of paid family leave for radiologists in the US was recently discussed in an editorial published in *Clinical Imaging*.

During the last annual meeting, the American College of Radiology recently voted for 12 weeks family/medical leave for diagnostic radiology but did not specify whether that was to be paid or unpaid leave. The editorial noted that one crucial difference between unpaid and paid family/medical leave is that unpaid leave is an exclusive policy that benefits only those whose circumstances permit, whereas paid family/medical leave, as an inclusive policy, benefits wellness, diversity, and equity.

The US Family and Medical Leave Act provides eligible employees with up to 12-weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year for the care of a new-born or adopted child, but does not mandate that the leave be paid. In contrast, federal employees may have to up to 12 weeks of paid time off for the birth, adoption, or placement of a new child.

The benefits of paid family leave listed are many and do not solely apply to the field of radiology. The societal benefits include decreased infant mortality, mother and infant hospitalizations, and expenditures related to health and childcare costs. The organisational benefits include reduced work force absences, and increased employee morale, job satisfaction, and productivity. Within departments, a formal policy instills a sense of consistency and fairness. Formalisation of paid leave avoids subjective decisions made on employees' personal situations and discussions on taking leave. Additional organisational benefits include earlier and more optimal planning since employees can provide more advanced notice. Paid leave can benefit organisations by improving employee retention, morale, and productivity. This also provide a strong incentive for recruitment.

Overall, mandatory paid family and medical leave applies to situations that radiologists likely experience at some point in their career. While there is a cost to paid family/medical leave, these costs can be mitigated with short-term disability, state programs, as well as careful organizational planning. The editorial concludes that a compelling case can be made for paid family leave due to improved retention, recruitment, productivity, and morale.

Source: [Clinical Imaging](#)

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