



MEDIA RELEASE

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Survey Reports Need for and Lack of Knowledge About California Paid Family Leave Insurance Program

June 22, 2004

A recent survey conducted by The Berger Institute for Work, Family, and Children at Claremont McKenna College revealed that less than 31 percent of respondents were familiar with the new California Paid Family Leave Insurance Program, which becomes effective July 1. Although nearly 50 percent of Anglo and Latino respondents reported taking at least one day off work in the past three months to care for a sick family member, and nearly half expect to be responsible for the care of an elderly family member during the next five years, awareness of the new legislation is low, according to Berger Institute staff.

A two-year grant from the California Wellness Foundation is funding Berger research on the Family Leave Insurance Program. The study sampled 364 participants (45 percent male, 55 percent female) in Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties. The new legislation provides California workers up to 55 percent of their wages while taking up to six weeks of leave for self-care, or to care for a sick or injured family member, as well as the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a new child.

Results of the study indicate that having part of their salary paid would allow employees to keep their jobs while assisting in the care of a sick or injured family member—ultimately lowering the overall costs of illness by helping people get better, sooner. Of those who had reported taking a leave, 80 percent used their time in a manner that helped a family member recover faster, such as trips to the hospital.

“With health care for middle- and low-income workers becoming an increasingly volatile political issue in America, we hope this research informs the debate over the costs and benefits of providing working adults with paid leave to care for sick family members,” says Diane Halpern, CMC professor of psychology, director of the Berger Institute, and president of the American Psychological Association.

Among the findings:

- One-third of the individuals who have taken time off from work to care for a sick family member stated that their job had been threatened or they had lost their job as a result.
- 33 percent of Anglos, but only 14 percent of Latinos, are familiar with the new legislation.

- After they were informed about the California Paid Leave Insurance Program, close to 75 percent of the respondents reported either somewhat positive or very positive attitudes toward the program, with similar attitudes for employers and employees.

The survey also found that Latinos may have greater need for the program, with about 80 percent, versus 56 percent of Anglos, reporting children in the household. Twenty-three percent of Latinos, and 10 percent of Anglos, reported care responsibility for a live-in disabled person.

The Berger Institute for Work, Family, and Children at Claremont McKenna College educates students, scholars, law-makers, and the community about a wide range of work and family issues, including the effects of changing demographics and diversity on work-family balance.