



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Thursday, June 10, 1999
CPM 99-W

MEMORANDUM FOR: Heads Of Executive Departments And Agencies

FROM: Janice R. Lachance Director

Subject: New Tools for Parents and Families in the New Economy

On May 24, 1999, President Clinton signed a memorandum that gives Federal employees caring for family members some important new family-friendly options. He directed the Office of Personnel Management to (1) propose Governmentwide regulations to allow employees to use a total of up to 12 weeks of sick leave each year to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition and (2) establish an Interagency Family Friendly Workplace Working Group to promote, evaluate, and exchange information on Federal family-friendly workplace initiatives. A copy of the [President's memorandum](#) is attached.

Expanded Use of Sick Leave for Family Care Purposes

Currently, most Federal employees may use a total of up to 13 days of sick leave for family care purposes. The proposed regulations would permit employees caring for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition to use a total of up to 12 weeks of sick leave to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition for this purpose. The use of paid sick leave under this policy would be subject to the same conditions as the use of unpaid leave to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA). In particular, the same notification and medical certification requirements that govern the use of unpaid leave to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent under the FMLA would apply to Federal employees who use paid sick leave under this new policy.

This benefit would broaden the options available for employees to meet their family responsibilities. Allowing an employee to use a total of up to 12 weeks of sick leave would preclude the need for many employees to use extended periods of leave without pay, which has a negative effect on an employee's pay and benefits, such as within-grade increases and health benefits. In addition, the employee would be better able to deal with the financial and personal strain caused by a family member's medical needs.

In response to the President's memorandum, OPM has begun the regulatory process required by the Administrative Procedure Act to revise the Governmentwide regulations to broaden the use of sick leave for family care purposes. We estimate that it will take 4 to 6 months to complete the process and make these changes effective. We will be issuing proposed regulations with a request for comments in the near future. Additional questions may be referred to OPM's Office of Compensation Administration on (202) 606-2858, or by FAX on (202) 606-0824 or email at payleave@opm.gov.

Family-Friendly Workplace Initiatives

To ensure that the Federal Government serves as a model employer actively pursuing policies to support working families, OPM will establish the Interagency Family Friendly Workplace Working Group called for in the President's memorandum. In his memorandum, the President also directs heads of agencies to appoint a family-friendly work/life coordinator to serve as a member of the Working Group. These individuals will serve as OPM's Family-Friendly Workplace Advocacy Office communication points for distributing information about program activities and developments and for sharing new ideas about family-friendly workplace practices.

As directed by the President, the Interagency Family Friendly Workplace Working Group must be established by August 22, 1999. In order for us to meet the President's deadline, please submit the name of your family-friendly work/life coordinator by **July 30, 1999**, to:

Anice V. Nelson, Director
Family-Friendly Workplace Advocacy Office
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street NW., Room 7315
Washington, DC 20415-2000
Telephone: (202) 606-2011
Fax: (202) 606-2091
Email: avnelson@opm.gov.

OPM's Family-Friendly Workplace Advocacy Office stands ready to help the family-friendly work/life coordinators with their new responsibilities to make employees aware of the full range of human resources flexibilities, provide information about child and elder care community resources, and establish and promote parent and elder care support groups and on-site nursing mothers programs.

We have just issued three new publications to assist in this effort: (1) the *Child Care Resources Handbook* helps employees identify types, quality, and sources of child care across the country; (2) the guide on *Establishing a Work-site Parenting Support Group* provides agencies with another tool to help their employees manage a family, career, and other personal demands; and (3) the publication *Establishing A Nursing Mothers Program - A Guide for the Federal Workplace* provides practical information on how to establish a work site nursing mothers program and a comprehensive listing of web sites on work and family and child care resources. These publications are available on OPM's web site at <http://www.opm.gov/wrkfam>. In addition, we have prepared a series of [questions and answers](#) on the role of the new Family Friendly Workplace Working Group (attached).

Attachments

- To [Attachment 1 - President's Memorandum on Work and Family](#)
- To [Attachment 2 - Questions and Answers on the role of the new Family Friendly Workplace Working Group](#)
- To [Compensation Administration Home Page](#)

Last Modified: 3:38:17 PM on Wednesday, August 20, 2003