

Year-End Update from the Time to Care Coalition, December 2009

A few updates on recent activities regarding NJ's Family Leave Insurance Program:

- ***FLI program brochures are now available*** on the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development website (available in both English and Spanish), as well as a guide for medical providers: http://lwd.state.nj.us/labor/fli/applctn/fli_application_landing_page.html.
- ***Information regarding take-up rates of FLI program*** (number of claims filed, determined eligible, ineligible, etc.) is now available on the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development website: http://lwd.state.nj.us/labor/fli/content/monthly_report_fli.html.
- ***Legislation is pending to make yearly adjustments to FLI cost assessments based on usage and other factors.*** S3065 has been approved by the Senate. (http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2008/Bills/S3500/3065_S1.PDF). Its counterpart in the Assembly has been approved by the Labor Committee and is awaiting full Assembly vote.
- ***Legislation calling for constitutional amendment to prohibit the raiding of TDI, FLI, and UI funds has been approved*** and the question will now be included on the November 2010 General Election ballot.
- Here are links to a few recent news articles regarding the FLI program:
 - o "Paid family leave / So far, so good." *Press of Atlantic City*
http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/opinion/editorials/article_8f471730-66f1-5aa0-a6a0-c88ddeec8db8.html
 - o "N.J. family leave no budget-buster." *Philly.com*
<http://www.philly.com/philly/news/local/78498042.html>
 - o "Worker contributions to N.J. family-leave fund could be adjusted."
NJ.com
http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2009/12/family_leave_deduction_changes.html

Additionally, we want to take a moment to reflect on the hard work done by the members of the NJ Time to Care Coalition during this past year and to thank each of you for all you have done.

The Year in Review

On July 1, 2009, in one of the most difficult economic climates, New Jersey became the second state in the nation to implement a Family Leave Insurance (FLI) program giving New Jersey workers and their families much needed respite from the additional financial burdens they may face when they take time to care for a sick family member or bond with a newborn or newly adopted child.

Here are some highlights of our activities this past year:

- ***Reviewed and analyzed draft FLI regulations and provided written comments and testimony*** to the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development at its regulatory hearings.
- ***Conducted outreach and education to New Jersey's working families*** on the availability of the benefit through numerous presentations throughout state, and in response to daily phone calls and emails for workers from all walks of life.
- ***Met with Labor Department staff*** early in the year to voice our concerns and issues so that they were addressed in the initial drafting of the regulations. And we continued discussions throughout the year with the Commissioner of Labor and his staff as they rolled out the program, providing suggestions and ideas on how to meet the needs of NJ's working families.
- ***Continued work on federal legislation***, reaching out to Members of Congress on the need for paid sick days and getting their support for the Healthy Families Act and the FIRST Act.
- ***Began the groundwork to move a state paid sick days campaign forward*** so that all New Jersey workers have access to paid time for to care for their own sickness or a sick family member.
- ***Continued to grow the Coalition***, adding several new member organizations.
- ***Redesigned and launched new website*** (www.njtimetocare.org). The new website is now a resource and advocacy tool for family leave insurance, paid sick days, and small necessities.

None of this work would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of all coalition members. But we still have much to do.

The future promises to be just as busy as we look for ways make sure that the Family Leave Insurance Program continues to serve NJ's working families, and we continue our work for paid sick days for all.

Hope to see you all at the next Coalition meeting to continue work on these important issues!

Wishing All Safe and Happy Holidays!!

Best,

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