

Paid family/medical leave in radiology, interventional radiology and radiation oncology

Whereas

The American College of Radiology (ACR) is “committed to the radiologist’s well-being as an integral part of high quality and safe patient care and the health of our members” [1]. A critical component of this would be supporting radiologists who experience serious medical conditions (or who have immediate family members who do) during the course of their professional career, as well as those whom experience pregnancy and childbirth; and

Whereas

The federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 requires private employers with 50 or more employees within 75 miles of the eligible employee’s worksite and all public agencies to provide eligible employees* up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period for the birth and care of a newborn, adopted child, or foster child, as well as for care of oneself or an immediate family member with a serious health condition [2]**; and

Whereas

“The American Academy of Pediatrics has publicly endorsed 12 weeks of paid family leave based upon the scientific evidence of benefits to the child.” [4]; and

Whereas

Since 2019, the Society of Chairs of Academic Radiology Departments (SCARD) pledges “to strive for departmental, institutional, and organizational change that provides 12 weeks of paid parental leave for eligible (as defined per the Family Medical Leave Act) faculty members of all genders.” [5]; and

Whereas

Since May 2021, the ACR supports allowing “a resident who is in compliance with clinical competency and Initial Certification requirements as well as is in good standing within their program to:

1. Take 12 weeks of family/medical leave during the course of residency (in addition to 4 weeks of vacation per year), while still remaining eligible to both sit for the Core/Qualifying Examinations and to graduate without extension of training.
2. Take additional family/medical leave if approved by the program director without extension of training (to be considered on a case by case basis), in keeping with the ABR Initial Certification requirements and Leaves of Absence policy currently in place.” [6, 7]; and

Whereas

The business case for paid family/medical leave is compelling, with “significant rewards that outweigh the costs: improved employee retention; better talent attraction; reinforced values; improved engagement, morale, and productivity; and enhanced brand equity.” [8]. For instance, research has shown that the average time to fill a vacant position is 42 days, and the average cost of a hire is at least 21% of annual salary [9]; and

Whereas

While the most frequent argument against paid family/parental leave is “we can’t afford it,” there are ways to mitigate the cost of paid leave. Some states offer a paid leave program that can be used to offset the cost to a practice [10]. Short-term disability insurance for all practice members can also protect a practice from unexpected medical issues. Lastly, practices can consider creating an account that is funded annually for circumstances requiring family/medical leave [9].

Be it resolved

That the American College of Radiology (ACR) recommends that diagnostic radiology, interventional radiology, radiation oncology and nuclear medicine practices, departments and training programs strive to provide 12 weeks of paid family/medical leave in a 12-month period for its attending and trainee physicians as needed.

Sponsored by:

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Council of Affiliated Regional Radiation Oncology Societies (CARROS)

District of Columbia Metropolitan Radiological Society

Kentucky State Radiological Society

Maine Radiological Society

Maryland Radiological Society

Massachusetts Radiological Society

Minnesota Radiological Society

Missouri State Radiological Society

New York State Radiological Society

North Carolina Radiological Society

Radiological Society of Puerto Rico

Rhode Island Radiological Society

Utah State Radiological Society

Virginia State Radiological Society

Fiscal note:

Costs: de minimis (< \$10,000)

*Defined, per FMLA, as “Employees are eligible for leave if they have worked for their employer at least 12 months, at least 1,250 hours over the past 12 months, and work at a location where the company employs 50 or more employees within 75 miles.” [3]

**Additional reasons under the FMLA include:

- any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on "covered active duty"; and
- to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness if the eligible employee is the service member's spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin (leave entitlement is up to 26 weeks in a 12-month period). [2]

***Defined, as "the problem of employees who are not fully functioning in the workplace because of an illness, injury or other condition. Even though the employee may be physically at work, he may not be able to fully perform his duties and is more likely to make mistakes on the job." [12]

References

- (1) American College of Radiology, Statement of Support: National Academy of Medicine Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience. Accessed May 30, 2018. <https://nam.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/American-College-of-Radiology-Commitment-Statement-.pdf>
- (2) US Department of Labor. Wage and Hour Division (WHD). Family and Medical Leave Act. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/>
- (3) US Department of Labor. Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. Accessed May 30, 2018. <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/benefits-leave/fmla> (citing 29 U.S.C. § 2611(2)).
- (4) Riano NS, Linos E, Accurso EC, Sung D, Linos E, Simard JF, Mangurian C. Paid Family and Childbearing Leave Policies at Top US Medical Schools. *JAMA*. 2018 Feb 13;319(6):611-614. doi: 10.1001/jama.2017.19519. PMID: 29450516; PMCID: PMC5838606.
- (5) Canon C, Enzmann DR, Grist TM, Meltzer CC, Norbash A, Omary R, et al. Letter to the Editor: Society of Chairs of Academic Radiology Departments Statement of Support for Paid Parental Leave. *JACR* 2019; 16(3): 271-272. Accessed April 29, 2019. [https://www.jacr.org/article/S1546-1440\(18\)31594-1/fulltext](https://www.jacr.org/article/S1546-1440(18)31594-1/fulltext)
- (6) Magudia K, Ng TSC, Campbell SR, Balthazar P, Dibble EH, Hassanzadeh CJ, Lall N, Merfeld EC, Esfahani SA, Jimenez RB, Fields EC, Lightfoote JB, Ackerman SJ, Jeans EB, Englander MJ, DeBenedictis CM, Porter KK, Spalluto LB, Deitte LA, Jagsi R, Arleo EK. Family/Medical Leave for Diagnostic Radiology, Interventional Radiology, and Radiation Oncology Residents in the United States: A Policy Opportunity. *Radiology*. 2021 Apr 13:210798. doi: 10.1148/radiol.2021210798. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33847521.
- (7) American College of Radiology (ACR) Reference Committee #1, amended resolution #48, passed May 18, 2021.
- (8) Huang G. The business case for paid leave at your company. *Forbes*. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/georgenehuang/2017/02/28/the-business-case-for-paid->

family-leave-at-your-company/#2c14371e4eae. Published February 28, 2017. Accessed August 13, 2018.

- (9) Arleo EK. Paid family/medical leave: That's great - What's next? Clin Imaging. 2020 May;61:A1-A3. doi: 10.1016/j.clinimag.2020.02.004. Epub 2020 Feb 20. PMID: 32115344.
- (10) State Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Laws, as of January 2021: California, New Jersey, Rhode Island, New York, District of Columbia, Washington, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Oregon. <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-leave/state-paid-family-leave-laws.pdf>. Accessed July 14, 2021.