

Newly Enacted Law Expands Earned Sick Time in Massachusetts

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On August 23, 2024, Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey signed An Act promoting access to midwifery care and out-of-hospital birth options. The intent of the law is to overhaul and enhance maternal health practices in Massachusetts and expand coverage for midwifery, birth centers, doulas, and screening and treatment for postpartum depression, among several other initiatives. The law takes effect on November 21, 2024.

Expansion of the Law

In addition to strengthening maternal health concerns for various demographics, it also expands Massachusetts employees' rights to use earned sick time. Under the revised law, employees are given the explicit right to use their earned sick time to address their own physical and mental health needs, as well as those of their spouse, in cases of pregnancy loss, unsuccessful assisted reproduction, adoption, or surrogacy. The revised law broadens the support available to employees and their spouses facing complex personal medical concerns.

Practical Takeaways

In light of the new law, employers should:

- Review their leave policies to determine if they need to be revised due to the expanded law.
- Inform human resources staff and managers about the details of the new law, including how to handle sick time requests in light of the changes.
- Educate employees about the resources available through the employer, such as counseling, support groups, or mental health services, which may be beneficial given the revised law.

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