



# Paid Family Leave: The Need for Outreach

Paid Family Leave allows most workers in the state to take up to 6 weeks of leave from their job and receive up to 55% of their wages. Paid Family Leave may be taken for bonding with a new baby or to take care of a sick family member, and is 100% worker funded.

## Awareness is Low

Overall, awareness of the Paid Family Leave program is low: **Less than half of survey respondents (42.7%) have heard of the program.** Awareness among low-income groups (25.4%), Latinos (35.9%), and young workers (26.6%) was substantially lower. Los Angeles County had the lowest rate of awareness about the program (31.4%).<sup>1</sup>

**Millions of California workers pay into an insurance fund that they do not know exists.**

## The Need is Great

Three-quarters of women entering the workforce today will become pregnant while employed. While roughly 500,000 births occur every year in California, approximately 130,000 women used PFL for bonding with newborn babies. In other words, only about a quarter of all mothers benefit from paid family leave to bond with their newborns.<sup>2</sup>

**The need for caregiving for family members is increasing:** More than one in six working Americans provide care to an elderly or disabled family member. Awareness of Paid Family Leave for caregiving is very low: Even among respondents who had heard of the program, almost one-quarter (22.3%) were not aware that it could be used to care for a family member.<sup>3</sup> Only 11 percent of authorized claims are for caregiving.<sup>4</sup>

## Enormous Benefits

Despite its low take-up among important constituencies, the program has been found to have enormous benefits:

- Mothers who took Paid Family Leave **breastfed their babies for twice as long** as the median duration of new mothers.
- The **proportion of new fathers** taking PFL for bonding has increased significantly, suggesting that the program increases bonding opportunities for the whole family.
- New mothers who are able to take leave after the birth of their babies experience **lower rates of post-partum depression.**
- Workers in low-quality jobs reported a positive effect on their ability to care for a new child because of Paid Family Leave, and are **more able to find reliable child care** before they return to work.
- An overwhelming majority of workers who took leave to care for an ill family member stated that the leave **positively impacted that family member's health.**<sup>5</sup>

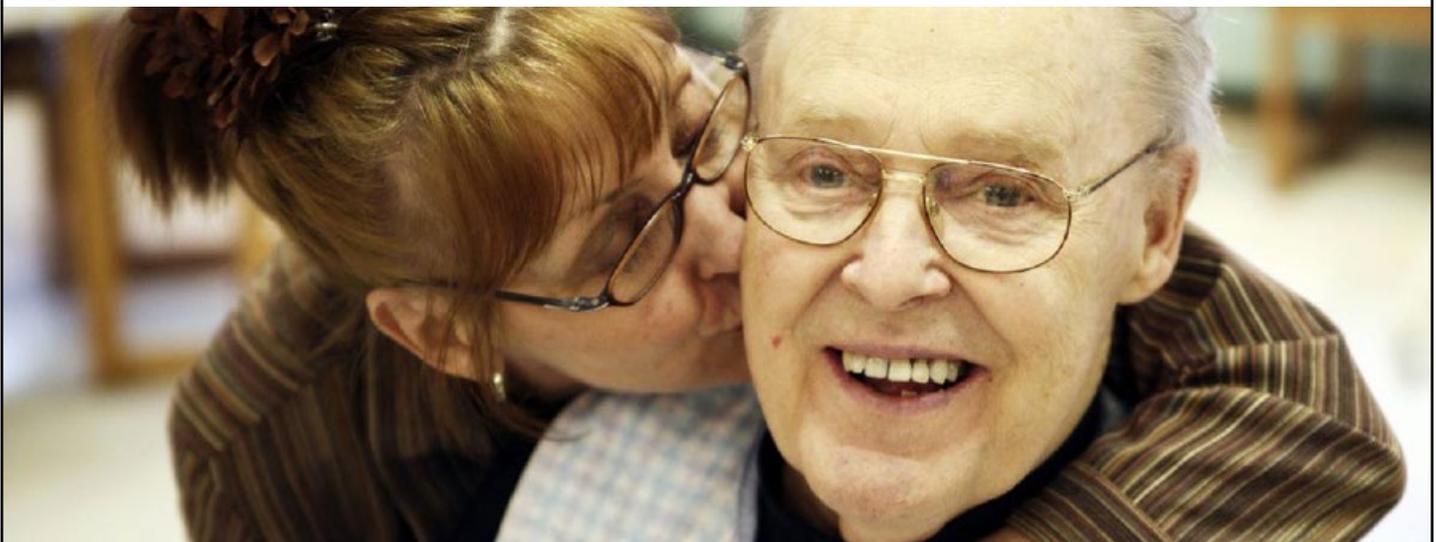
## Action is Needed

Paid Family Leave is a critical support for families, but knowledge about the program is too low. In the meantime, workers continue to pay into the fund without benefitting from leave. **The time for a statewide outreach and education campaign to increase take-up is now.**

Workers pay into the State Disability Insurance Fund to pay for their Paid Family Leave benefits. That fund is healthy, containing a projected balance of \$3.1 billion in 2014. **The state should expend a portion of the State Disability Insurance Fund on outreach and education efforts, targeted to those with the lowest awareness.**

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## Notes

1. Ruth Milkman and Eileen Appelbaum. 2013. *Unfinished Business: Paid Family Leave in California and the Future of U.S. Work-Family Policy*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press.
2. Based on California Employment Development Department data.
3. Ruth Milkman and Eileen Applebaum. *Id.*
4. Data from EDD: DIS 33RO6-01 First Payment Time Lapse, data for 2011.
5. Eileen Appelbaum and Ruth Milkman, "Leaves that Pay," (Washington, DC: Center for Economic and Policy Research, 2011). Available at <http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>. Rada Dagher, "Maternity Leave Duration and Postpartum Mental and Physical Health: Implications for Leave Policies," *Journal of Health Politics, Policy, and Law* (2013). Available at <http://jhppl.dukejournals.org/content/early/2013/11/27/03616878-2416247.abstract>