



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Policies and Procedures

Medical Leave of Absence

Policy Number: Employee Benefits, #17
Date Issued: February 24, 2015 **This policy supersedes and replaces all previously issued policies related to Medical Leaves of Absence.**
Previous Issues: September 1, 2014.
Page 1 of 3

- I. **Purpose/Background:** Allegheny County recognizes employees may need leave from work for their own medical reasons where the leave does not qualify as leave under Federal or State leave laws.
- II. **Scope:** This policy applies to all County Employees.
- III. **Policy Statement:** Allegheny County may, at its discretion, allow for authorized time off from work without pay for an employee for his or her own extended sickness or other non-recurring health condition for a period not to exceed one year. Intermittent leave and reduced work schedules are not permitted under this policy.
 - a. **Substitution of Accrued Paid Leave (i.e., Benefit Time):** An employee on approved Medical Leave of Absence is required to substitute accrued paid leave for unpaid Medical Leave in the following order: sick days, vacation days, then personal days. Ten days of accrued paid leave may be reserved. The unpaid Medical Leave of Absence and the substitution of paid leave will run concurrently.
 - b. **Paid Parental Leave:** Full-time employees who are not subject to the provisions of a collective bargaining unit; who have worked for the County for at least 12 months; and who have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months prior to taking leave under this Medical Leave Policy for the birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child will be granted six consecutive weeks of paid parental leave. This paid leave will not reduce or expand the total amount of leave time available to employees under this Medical Leave policy and will not include paid holidays as defined by the official calendar for County employees. Employees will be required to substitute accrued paid leave (i.e., Benefit time) in accordance with **Section III. a.** of this policy for leave from work beyond the six weeks of paid parental leave.
 - c. **Holidays and Holiday Pay:** An employee in an “active pay status” will receive holiday pay while on a Medical Leave of Absence. An employee in a “no pay status” will receive holiday pay for holidays that occur during his or her leave when he or she returns to work.
 - d. **Maintenance of Health Benefits:** Allegheny County will maintain health coverage at the same level and under the same conditions as if employment continued uninterrupted for an employee on an approved Medical Leave of Absence. The employee will be responsible for his or her share of benefit costs. Coverage may be terminated if payment is more than 30 days late. Allegheny County may recover from an employee the County portion of the premium paid to maintain benefit coverage during the leave if he or she does not return to work for reasons other than for the medical condition for which he or she was grant leave or he or she returns for less than thirty days.

- e. **Employee Responsibilities While on Medical Leave:** An employee on an approved Medical Leave of Absence must contact his or her supervisor and any other designee at least once every 30 days to report his or her leave status and intent to return to work.
- f. **Restoration to Position:** Allegheny County will seek to restore an employee returning from a medical leave of absence to his or her original position or to an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms, but only if available.
- g. **Return to Work:** Failure to return to work from an approved Medical Leave of Absence is subject to general employment policies and may result in termination of employment.
- h. **Violations:** Any employee who fails to comply with the provisions of this policy and these procedures may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Allegheny County Progressive Discipline Policy.

IV. Allegheny County reserves the right to change this policy at any time.

V. Medical Leave of Absence Procedures:

- a. **Advance Notice:** Thirty days advance notice of the need to take a Medical Leave of Absence is required when the need is foreseeable. If 30 days advance notice is not possible due to an emergency or unforeseen circumstance, then the employee must provide notice as soon as reasonable and practicable. Notice of the need for leave must be given to the employee's supervisor and to UPMC WorkPartners. UPMC WorkPartners may be contacted by phone at 1-855-396-8762. Submission of additional documentation may be required depending upon the reason for leave. Failure to provide adequate documentation within 15 days or other specified time frame may result in denial of leave. Absences will be unauthorized and the employee may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. An employee is required, if possible, to notify his or her supervisor or other department designee of the expected return-to-work date five days prior to his or her return. The employee must present a Return to Work Form or other certification from his or her health care provider to his or her supervisor or other designee prior to returning to work. Any employee who fails to provide the certification will not be permitted to return to work.
- a. **Leave Benefit Time Use Form:** Employees who wish to reserve benefit days must complete the Leave Benefit Time Use Form and return it to their supervisor, department payroll personnel or other designee. Employees may obtain the Leave Benefit Time Use Form from their department payroll personnel, from the Department of Human Resources or from the County's Intranet site.
- b. **Approval Process:** Timely and complete submission of adequate documentation to substantiate the need for leave is required. Failure to provide adequate documentation within 15 days or other specified time frame may result in denial of leave. Absences will be considered unauthorized and the employee may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. UPMC WorkPartners will review the documentation to determine whether the information submitted is sufficient to designate time off work. UPMC WorkPartners will:
 - i. inform the employee the leave request is approved; or
 - ii. inform the employee that additional information is needed to determine if the leave request can be approved (information needed to make the certification complete and sufficient will be specified); or
 - iii. inform the employee that the leave request is denied.
- c. **Placing an Employee on a Medical Leave of Absence:** A representative in the department in which the employee works will prepare and submit a Personnel Action Authorization form (PAA 1000) to place the employee on a Medical Leave of Absence. The PAA 1000 must be approved by the Department Director and the Department of Human Resources.
- d. **Extension of Leave:** If an employee needs to take more leave than originally anticipated, he or she may request an extension of leave by contacting his or her department or other designee. Documentation to support the extension of leave may be required.

- e. **Returning an Employee from a Medical Leave of Absence:** A representative in the department in which the employee works will prepare and submit a Personnel Action Authorization form (PAA 1000) to return the employee from a Medical Leave of Absence. The PAA 1000 must be approved by the Department Director and the Department of Human Resources.