



Maine Women's Lobby

THE VOICE OF MAINE WOMEN

MEDIA RELEASE

January 7, 2010

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Health Professionals Laud President Mitchell's Paid Sick Days Bill

National research firm finds "An Act to Prevent the Spread of H1N1" would protect public health and reduce the spread of contagion in the workplace

Augusta - Health experts and advocates joined Senate President Libby Mitchell to discuss the results of a recent Health Impact Assessment on paid sick day policy in Maine.

By taking action to enable workers to take care of themselves during this public health crisis, Maine lawmakers will protect business productivity and the public's health. "An Act to Prevent the Spread of H1N1" L.D. 1665), introduced by Senate President Libby Mitchell, would provide up to six paid days annually for workers in large businesses, and approximately three paid days for workers in small business.

Said Dr. Daniel Summers, a Winthrop physician specializing in Adolescent Medicine and Pediatrics, "I tell the parents of the young people that I treat to follow the CDC's advice and keep children home when their sick. For more than 200,000 Maine workers without paid sick days, that's simply not an option. We need the State Legislature to step in. Every parent I talk to should be in the position to take my advice for their own safety, the safety of their children, and the safety of the public at large. But until we pass this law, there will be those who won't be able to do what is best for their family's health, the public health, and the health of our economy..."

Dr. Sydney Sewall, an Augusta physician specializing in Pediatrics since 1982, added "The data is clear. A paid sick day policy in Maine is needed to avoid costly emergency room visits and curtail the spread of contagious diseases like H1N1. In this time of pandemic flu, it's imperative that we take action to ensure that every family can follow the public health advice to stay home from work, and keep children home from school, when sick."

The report, conducted by Human Impact Partners and available at <http://www.humanimpact.org/PSD/>

The Maine Women's Lobby is a non-partisan, non-profit, membership organization working since 1978 to increase opportunities for women and girls through advocacy and legislative action.

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