Paid Sick Leave Signed by President

On Wednesday, March 19, 2020, President Donald J. Trump signed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R. 6201). The bill provides emergency paid leave for workers and benefits for families across the country, including free coronavirus testing, covering the costs of eligible emergency room visits, doctor fees, and supplements the food-assistance program.

The paid sick leave program in the legislation will take effect within 15 days of the bill’s signing and extend through the end of 2020. It requires employers with 500 or fewer employees to provide job-protected paid leave for employees for up to 10 weeks. Employees may take the leave for:

1. exposure to the coronavirus or the exhibiting of symptoms of the coronavirus;
2. a health care provider recommends they quarantine and the employee cannot work from home;
3. the need to care for a family member who has been exposed to or exhibits symptoms of the coronavirus; or
4. the need to care for a child younger than 18 because of school or day-care closures or childcare provider being unavailable.

The first 14 days of leave may be unpaid. For the remainder of the 10-week period, the employee should be compensated for their ordinary work hours and not less than two-thirds of their regular rate of pay. Employers must pay for the leave and will be able to receive complete refunds via a refundable tax credit against the employer’s payroll within three months.

Employers with fewer than 50 employees may opt-out if providing the paid leave would jeopardize business viability.

The legislation also provides up to $1 billion in 2020 to assist states with the funding of unemployment benefits. Leaders continue to work on a federal aid package.

PIA will continue to update our information on state and federal responses to the novel COVID-19 pandemic. If you have further questions, contact the PIA Industry Resource Center or call (800) 424-4244.