

Starting January 1, 2018, New York State’s Paid Family Leave provides job-protected, paid time off so an employee can bond with a newly born, adopted or fostered child.

Physicians and other licensed health care providers play a key role in helping patients and their families take Paid Family Leave.

What impact does Paid Family Leave have on patient health?

Paid Family Leave can provide a number of health benefits for employees and their families. For example, studies have shown that:

- New mothers who take paid leave have fewer postpartum depression symptoms, higher breastfeeding rates, and breastfeed longer.
- Parents are less stressed and have stronger parent-child bonding.
- Infants have fewer infections and are generally healthier.
- Hospitalized patients who are cared for by family members have shorter hospital stays and improved health outcomes.

What is your role as a health care provider in Paid Family Leave?

As a health care provider, you can play a critical role in:

- Educating your patients and their families about New York State’s Paid Family Leave.
- Determining if a patient with a serious health condition is in need of family care and helping them receive the support they need.
- Providing the required certification or documentation to patients and family members who request Paid Family Leave for either bonding with a new child, or caring for a family member with a serious health condition.

The following licensed health care providers may complete necessary documentation for Paid Family Leave within their scope of practice:

- Physician
- Physician Assistant
- Chiropractor
- Dentist
- Physical Therapist
- Nurse Practitioner
- Registered Professional Nurse
- Podiatrist
- Optometrist
- Psychologist
- Clinical Social Worker
- Occupational Therapist
- Midwife
- Mental Health Practitioner

Certification for birth

A parent whose name is listed on a child's birth certificate can submit that birth certificate as documentation for bonding leave. However, since birth certificates typically are not available for some time after a child's birth, qualifying documentation in the form of a letter may be needed from you as the patient's health care provider.

The letter certifies the birth of the newborn and must include:

- The mother's name.
- The actual or expected date of the child's birth.
- The health care provider's name, address, phone number, and medical credentials (information on letterhead is often sufficient).

A parent who is not the birth mother must submit documentation establishing their legal role as the child's parent, and demonstrating their relationship to the birth mother. Acceptable forms of documentation include:

- A birth certificate, court order of filiation, voluntary acknowledgment of paternity naming that parent, or a copy of documentation of pregnancy or birth from the health care provider that includes the mother's name and child's due date or birth date.
- A second document verifying the parent's relationship with the birth mother or child (e.g., marriage certificate, civil union, or domestic partnership documents).

Foster Child: No action required. A letter of foster care placement issued by the county or city department of Social Services or voluntary foster care agency is required.

Adoptive Child: No action required. A court document of final adoption or documentation in furtherance of adoption is required.

What is your role in the request process for bonding?

The steps below outline an example of the request process and your role in it:

1. Your patient (the birth mother) may request a letter from you in order to submit a request for Paid Family Leave.
2. You complete the letter and return it to your patient.
3. Your patient then attaches the letter with her completed *Request For Paid Family Leave (Form-PFL -1)* and *Bonding Certification (Form PFL-2)* and submits it to her employer's insurance carrier.

For more information, visit ny.gov/PaidFamilyLeave or call (844) 337-6303.