

Paid Leave for Cancer Screening



Over 25,000 New Yorkers are diagnosed with breast, cervical, or colorectal cancer each year. These cancers account for nearly 20% of cancer deaths in New York State (NYS). While early detection of these cancers improves treatment outcomes, employees without paid time off for health screenings (paid leave) are less likely to get recommended cancer screenings than employees with paid leave.¹ Having paid leave from work, especially paid leave for cancer screenings, may reduce barriers and increase cancer screening rates.

A public opinion poll conducted in NYS found:

- Nine out of 10 adults in NYS support requiring employers to offer all employees paid leave to receive preventive health screenings such as screening tests for breast or colorectal cancer (Figure 1).
- Women (92%) were significantly more in favor of the policy than men (84%), as were residents of New York City (NYC) (93%) compared to rest of state (85%).
- Support was particularly high among adults with an annual household income <\$25,000 (93%) and adults ages 18-34 (94%).

Figure 1. Public support for policy in NYS requiring employers to offer all employees paid leave to receive health screenings, by select demographics, 2015



Data Source: 2015 Chronic Disease Public Opinion Poll

Public Health Opportunity

Workplaces can increase the likelihood of employees getting recommended cancer screenings through strategies outlined in the [NYS Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan](#):

- Offer all employees paid leave or the option to use flex time for cancer screenings.
- Promote cancer screening through educational materials on the benefits of early detection and encouraging employees to use time off for cancer screenings.

For more information, please send an e-mail to BCDER@health.ny.gov with IFA # 2017-01 in the subject line. To access other Information for Action reports, visit the NYSDOH public website: http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/prevention/injury_prevention/information_for_action/index.htm

¹Peipins LA, Soman A, Berkowitz Z, White MC. The lack of paid sick leave as a barrier to cancer screening and medical care-seeking: results from the National Health Interview Survey. *BMC Public Health* 2012;12(1):520.