



# Reminder: Massachusetts PFML Fully Available Beginning July 2021

Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave (“PFML”) has provided protected leave and wage replacement benefits to eligible employees for certain qualifying reasons. Beginning July 1, 2021, in addition to the leave reasons that have been effective since the beginning of 2021, employees may take up to 12 weeks of family leave per year to care for a family member with a serious health condition. With this phase in, all leave reasons will be effective.

## ■ Background

Beginning January 1, 2021, PFML benefits have been available to eligible employees for up to:

- 12 weeks to bond with a child during the first 12 months after the child’s birth, adoption or foster care placement or due to a qualifying exigency arising out of family member being on or called for active duty;
- 20 weeks for an employee’s own serious health condition; and
- 26 weeks to care for a family member who is a covered servicemember.

There is a 7-day waiting period before benefits may begin. No more than 26 weeks may be taken in a year.

## ■ Family Leave to Care for a Family Member

Beginning July 1, 2021, up to 12 weeks of family leave may be taken per year to care for a family member with a serious health condition.

Family members, for the purpose of Massachusetts PFML benefits, include: the employee’s spouse, domestic partner, child, parent, grandchild, grandparent or sibling; the parent of employee’s spouse or domestic partner; and guardians who legally acted as a parent when the employee was a minor. Where an employee’s family member lives does not affect their eligibility. An employee can take paid family leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition no matter where they are located.

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves receiving care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider.



## ■ Employer Action

When applying for family leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition under the public option, both the employee who is applying for leave and a health care provider must complete a portion of the “Certification of a Serious Health Condition” form as part of the employee’s application.

Employers with a private plan exemption will need to verify with their carriers the documents necessary for applying for this type of leave.

Additionally, employers should review their leave policies and procedures to make sure they are compliant when benefits to care for a family member with a serious health condition becomes available beginning July 1, 2021.