

Family Values at Work: It's about Time

Supporting HB 901 will strengthen Georgia's families, schools and businesses. Flexible family-leave policies build healthy communities through better access to preventative health care and services. It will help Georgia communities thrive in a modern, competitive economy.

Georgia businesses would save nearly \$40 million in gained productivity if working adults had time off for influenza vaccines. Immunizing a healthy working adult for influenza saves, on average, more than \$46 per person immunized. Workers with current flu vaccinations get sick significantly less, miss 43% less work, and have 44% fewer visits to the doctor due to flu-like illnesses. Increasing Georgia's immunization rate just 15% to reach the goals in Healthy People 2010* will increase economic productivity.

Working caregivers need time off to fulfill their family obligations. Flexible leave policies that encourage working adults take their elderly relatives to get immunized will save on average, \$117 per vaccination due to decreased medical expenses; with more than 800,000 persons over the age of 65 in Georgia, the state stands to save more than \$14 million by increasing the percentage of elderly persons immunized from 65% to 80%. Elderly people are much more likely to get sick with the flu, and are hospitalized more often with flu symptoms.

Preventing heart disease is a good investment for Georgia. With 18% of all Georgians uninsured, government sources pay \$683 million *per year* in hospitalization costs alone for heart attacks—lost productivity makes the number far higher. Chronic diseases such as heart disease are responsible for more than 75% of the increase in health care spending in Georgia, yet patients with those chronic conditions receive only two-thirds of the care they need. Flexible family leave policies encourage early medical treatment and prevention of heart disease.

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The average cost for a single hospitalization in the state of Georgia due to heart disease costs \$28,500.

Preventing heart disease through medications and doctor visits costs about \$2,000 per year: preventing expensive hospital visits makes *financial* sense. Even better, helping to reduce the more than 22,000 deaths in Georgia due to heart disease makes *moral* sense.

Controlling chronic childhood asthma benefits Georgia in several ways. Asthma is the nation's # 1 cause of pediatric hospitalizations. More than 50% of Georgia's pediatric asthma-related hospitalizations are unnecessary. If parents had time off work to take their children to preventative visits, **Georgia could save at least \$5 million annually** by eliminating unnecessary hospitalizations. Regular care through increased access to asthma inhalers, doctor visits, and asthma prevention education is critical to control asthma.

Sick kids can't learn. Our children would also miss fewer days of school, thereby receiving a better education and forming a strong backbone for tomorrow's society and economy. Asthma is one of the leading causes of missing school (470,000 school days are missed per year by Georgia's 250,000 asthmatic children).

Sources:

***Healthy People 2010 National Objectives:** <http://www.healthypeople.gov>
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