

September 29, 2016

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To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Nadeen Israel and I am the Policy Director of EverThrive Illinois. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this letter of support regarding the Earned Sick Time proposal in Cook County.

As a non-profit organization experienced in Illinois' maternal and child health program and advocacy efforts for over 27 years, EverThrive IL works to improve the health of Illinois women, children, adolescents and families over the lifespan through community engagement, partnerships, policy analysis, education, and advocacy. We have, since our establishment, worked with many advocates, organizations, and elected officials from both sides of the aisle to promote programs and systems focused on improving maternal and child health in Illinois. Issues, including paid sick time, have a direct impact on the health of Chicago women, children, adolescents, and families.

All of us will get sick at some point, sick enough to need to stay home. But in Cook County, hundreds of thousands of workers, many of which are low-wage workers and female single heads of households, have no right to a single paid sick day. Without paid sick time, workers have few options: They may come to work sick because they cannot afford to miss a day's pay or fear being fired – and can infect co-workers and the public, such as customers and run the risk of getting sicker. If their child is the one who is sick, they may send their child to childcare or school sick so that they can go to work. This increases the risk of infecting other children as well as the child's illness getting worse. Their only other choice is to stay home and not get paid. Staying home without pay will affect their ability to pay their basic living expenses like rent or groceries. These workers may also risk being fired, losing their desired work schedule, and/or experience a reduction in their scheduled hours.

Low-wage workers in occupations like food prep, serving, and personal care, the majority of whom are women, face this struggle regularly because of the lack of paid sick time. In addition to the clear benefits for workers, there are numerous benefits to employers of providing paid sick days as well, including more productive workers, a healthier staff, and reduced turnover which means that employers save the costs of replacing workers.

EverThrive IL supports Cook County's Earned Sick Time proposal. We certainly appreciate the consideration of our letter of support, thank you.

Best,

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