

A photograph of a Walmart store's exterior. The building has a blue upper section with the 'Walmart' logo in large white letters and a yellow sunburst icon. Below the blue section is a grey concrete wall with several doors. In the foreground, a paved area is cordoned off with yellow caution tape. Several people, some wearing face masks, are standing near a row of blue metal shopping carts. A palm tree is visible on the left side of the frame.

Walmart

WALMART'S ROLE IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

**How lack of paid sick time prolongs
the pandemic and increases mortality**

April 2021

humanimpact.org/walmart

HIP
HUMAN IMPACT PARTNERS

Paid sick time policies are an investment in the health of Walmart associates

Paid sick time policies are critical to allow employees to recover from illness and tend to the health of their loved ones without worrying about wage and job loss. This hasn't been the case for Walmart associates, though — especially since the pandemic started. Walmart has rebuffed the importance of adequate paid sick time for its employees by rejecting the adoption of a fair policy that would allow employees the time they need to care for themselves or a loved one when ill. Walmart even denied shareholders' requests to study the feasibility of increased paid time this year as the pandemic raged.¹

Unfortunately, Walmart associates have few options in accessing adequate and flexible paid sick time without employer support. There is currently no federal requirement for employers to provide employees with paid sick time. While some local and state laws mandate the provision of paid sick time, these laws are varied and often go unenforced. They are often filled with loopholes and are difficult to understand and/or access.²⁻⁴ For example, the Families First Act Coronavirus Response Act paid sick time policy does not apply to private employers with more than 500 employees, including Walmart.⁵



As part of the Five to Survive campaign, United for Respect is calling on corporations including Walmart to take responsibility for the safety and well-being of their essential workers via guaranteed paid sick time, wage increase, virus safety at work, retaliation protection, and worker-led safety discussions.

PAID SICK TIME IS A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE

Stable and adequate employment income provides individuals, families, and communities with the economic security needed for a healthy life.^{6,7} We all need income to afford quality housing; to pay for essential needs like groceries, medicine, and childcare; and to be able to rest and recover through leisure and personal care. When we don't have stable income, we can't meet these basic needs.

Lack of access to paid sick time through work threatens employees' income stability and ability to meet basic needs. Employees who don't have access to paid sick time can't afford to miss work when they or a family member is ill. They may lose wages or their job altogether, compromising their overall economic security as well as their health. A lack of paid sick time harms low-income communities and communities of color disproportionately and has ripple effects for public health, which we describe in detail in this research brief.

Walmart employees who don't have adequate paid sick time are living out these impacts in real time during the COVID-19 pandemic

Today, Walmart's lack of an adequate paid sick time policy has had profound consequences for associates, families, and communities since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic: ***if Walmart had an adequate paid sick time policy in place before the pandemic hit, we estimate that at least 7,618 fewer associates would have become sick with COVID-19 and 133 associate lives could have been saved.***

Prior to the pandemic, Walmart employees only had 48 hours of "protected paid time off" to care for themselves or a family member with an illness.⁸ Not only is this amount of time insufficient to reap benefits to health, but workers also face barriers to accessing the policy.⁹⁻¹¹ According to a 2020 survey of more than 1,500 associates, 45% — or nearly half — reported they were still likely to come into work when sick. Associates cited barriers like poor communication about the company paid sick time policy from management, and pressure to continue working to avoid disciplinary points and loss of income and hours. Additionally,

...if Walmart had an adequate paid sick time policy in place before the pandemic hit, we estimate that at least 7,618 fewer associates would have become sick with COVID-19 and 133 associate lives could have been saved.

part-time associates (who make up 40% of the workforce) accrue paid sick time more slowly than full-time associates, so they may have limited time to draw from. Further, using paid time off can be counted against employees, for example, impacting whether or not they get a quarterly bonus.^{9,10}

“Coronavirus is new, but the failures of Walmart’s response aren’t new to us. Paid sick leave is one of the areas where we’ve been telling management for years that the policies incentivize associates to come to work sick. These and other gaps in Walmart’s pandemic response are life and death for us and for customers, and are a huge risk to the company.”

—Cynthia Murray, Walmart associate

While Walmart has adopted a temporary policy related to the pandemic, Walmart employees who are ill, or have some potential COVID-19 symptoms, or who choose to self-isolate, cannot count on any additional paid time under Walmart’s COVID-19 plan.¹² In June 2020, twelve attorneys general came together to publicly voice their concerns with Walmart’s sick time policy and to make recommendations on how to improve it.¹³

“The pressure that workers feel to keep working even if they are sick or symptomatic is directly related to Walmart’s inadequate paid leave policies.”

—Kwame Raoul, Illinois Attorney General, along with attorneys general from eleven other states

In the absence of consistent paid sick time laws and lack of enforcement, employees often face widespread barriers to accessing a benefit that is rightfully theirs.^{14,15} And these barriers mirror and exacerbate existing inequities: Black, Latinx, retail, and part-time employees (disproportionately women) lack access to paid sick time — nearly half (48%) of Latinx employees and over a third (36%) of Black employees do not receive paid sick time.^{16–20}

Because Walmart employs more women and Black and Latinx workers than any other US corporation, the positive outcomes associated with paid sick time would be far-reaching — to families and communities across the country, with benefits for gender, economic, and racial equity.

Because Walmart employs more women and Black and Latinx workers than any other US corporation, the positive outcomes associated with paid sick time would be far-reaching — to families and communities across the country, with benefits for gender, economic, and racial equity.²¹⁻²³ A paid sick time policy would also protect public health more widely by preventing community spread of disease. Research shows that paid sick time can:

- Reduce pandemic-related infection and mortality
- Improve health outcomes for employees and their families
- Increase job retention and economic gains for employers



Paid sick time reduces COVID-19 infection and mortality

Paid sick time is an effective public health tool for managing contagion.^{2,24} Research on paid sick time policies point to their effectiveness at curbing illness, including during pandemics, such as the H1N1 pandemic of 2009.^{25,26}

Paid sick time is more effective than *unpaid* sick time in reducing the spread of infection.²⁷ For many families, a day of missed work has serious consequences and impacts their ability to pay for rent and other essential needs. A recent study revealed that 94% of employees would comply with self-quarantine during COVID-19 when they were compensated for loss of income, whereas only 57% of employees would comply with the guidance if they weren't compensated.²⁸

“If I can’t go to work, I could try to take a leave but it will be unpaid. I don’t know what I would be doing about taking care of my family.”

—Mendy Hughes, Walmart associate

When employees have access to paid sick time, they’re more likely to stay home to address immediate health needs, and they’re also more likely to stay home to care for sick family members, including children.²⁹ When employees are able to protect their own health, they’re also protecting the public’s health by limiting potential exposure to coworkers and customers, a necessary measure to reduce the community spread of disease.

More than a quarter (27%) of employees were at greater risk of ILI due to lack of access to sick time. Researchers extrapolated that this likely resulted in an additional five million cases of ILI in the general population during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic.

LACK OF PAID SICK TIME EXACERBATES PANDEMICS

Groups that make up Walmart’s workforce — particularly private-sector employees, retail and part-time employees, and people of color — disproportionately lack access to paid sick time.^{30,31} Research shows that most people who went to work while infected with H1N1 were employed in the private sector. At no fault of their own, these private sector workers likely passed the virus on to an additional seven million coworkers. The lack of paid sick time directly resulted in lengthening the duration and expanding the impact of the pandemic.³¹

When employers don’t provide paid sick time, the rate of influenza-like illness (ILI) is higher overall. During the H1N1 pandemic, employees who reported that they wouldn’t get paid if they didn’t go to work, or who didn’t have sick time protections, were more likely to contract an ILI. More than a quarter (27%) of employees were at greater risk of ILI due to lack of access to sick time. Researchers extrapolated that this likely resulted in an additional five million cases of ILI in the general population during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic.²⁰



Walmart is the largest corporate employer of Black, Latinx, and women workers in the country. An effective paid sick time policy would have implications for racial, gender, and economic equity in the US.

ACCESS TO PAID SICK TIME SAVES LIVES

When select US states mandated paid sick time between 2010 and 2018, ILI cases decreased. On average, ILI rates fell by 11% each week in the first year of a state's policy implementation.³² Additional research goes even further, showing that paid sick time reduced workplace infections by nearly 40%, such as in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.^{27,33,34}

One way that paid sick time supports employees' health is that it gives them the opportunity to seek care. Among employees who reported an ILI during the



No one should have to choose between caring for a sick loved one or losing their job. A robust paid sick time policy would allow Walmart workers to take time off to care for family members if they become ill.

Using a methodology from researchers at University of Wisconsin, we predict that if Walmart had a paid sick time policy in place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, at least 7,618 fewer associates would have become ill from COVID-19 between February 2020 and February 2021). Additionally, the deaths of at least 133 people who worked at Walmart could have been prevented in that same time period.

H1N1 pandemic, those with paid sick time were more likely to visit a medical professional for treatment, even after controlling for variables like occupation. Employees were also more likely to get the flu vaccine than workers without the benefit.¹⁶

Using a methodology from researchers at University of Wisconsin, we predict that if Walmart had a paid sick time policy in place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, at least 8,000 fewer associates would have become ill from COVID-19 between February 2020 and February 2021 (see Table 1 and Appendix for data methodology).³⁴ Additionally, the deaths of at least 133 people who worked at Walmart could have been prevented in that same time period.

Tragically, these estimates are conservative, as they rely on general population-level data of COVID-19 cases and mortality rate. In reality, cases and deaths are likely higher for Walmart associates because retail workers have an increased exposure to the virus compared to the general population, and often come from communities that are most vulnerable to the virus as a result of systemic social, political, and economic inequities.^{35,36} Almost a third of estimated Walmart associate lives saved are attributable to states where most Walmart employees are based. While some states, like California, have a universal paid sick time policy, employees often experience barriers to accessing the benefit without employer support.

“I am 64 and have asthma. My husband and son are both high risk. Since the pandemic started, I’ve taken two leaves of absence after my daughter reminded me that my job shouldn’t put my life at risk.”

—Cynthia Murray, Walmart associate

Table 1. Reductions in COVID-19 cases and mortality among Walmart hourly associates as a result of universal paid sick time policy*

LOCATION	# ASSOCIATES	# ESTIMATED CASES	# ESTIMATED DEATHS	# CASES PREVENTED	# LIVES SAVED
United States	1,442,569	126,961	2,222	7,618	133
Texas	158,361	14,378	240	863	14
Florida	103,550	9,124	150	547	9
California	90,562	8,147	115	489	7
Georgia	58,555	5,501	95	330	6
North Carolina	53,619	4,361	57	262	3

**The time period for these estimates is 2/26/2020–2/26/2021. See Appendix for calculations. Data sources: Walmart, Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, Statista, US Census Bureau, and Pichler and Ziebarth (2016)^{27,39-42}*

We know that estimates on associate deaths due to COVID-19 as disclosed by Walmart aren’t accurate or up to date. Walmart has refused to disclose the number of COVID-19 infections and deaths, including from local health departments. It’s been almost a year since Walmart shared information about COVID-19 cases and deaths among associates.³⁷ Walmart employees are self-reporting COVID-19 infections to United For Respect and describing the company’s lack of precautions to protect employees and customers. Currently, United For Respect is tracking 1,862 associate-reported cases at 355 stores and facilities.³⁸ Without universal paid sick time, thirteen additional Walmart employees will be at risk of COVID-19 death between April and July 2021 — unless the company takes immediate action.

Walmart workers fighting for better, safer working conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic.



“Management isn’t letting the employees know about the number of cases and they’re not cleaning or reporting the cases.”

—Walmart associate from North Carolina

PAID SICK TIME IS CRITICAL FOR COVID-19 RECOVERY AND VACCINE DISTRIBUTION

It is now over a year since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we remain far from recovery. Many factors, including limited vaccine supply, slow vaccine distribution, and novel strains of the virus can shift the trajectory and speed of recovery from the pandemic. Undoubtedly, a universal paid sick time policy would be an essential tool to move our country closer toward recovery.

COVID-19 vaccines are the light at the end of the tunnel for millions of people. However, vaccine distribution overall is proceeding slowly and inequitably in some areas of the country, particularly in states where almost 500,000, or a third of Walmart associates, are based. For example, Texas is home to more Walmart associates than any other US state (n=158,361) and has one of the lowest

Employees also need paid sick time to schedule and make vaccine appointments, and to also take their loved ones to these appointments, which Walmart is currently not in support of.

vaccine distribution rates in the country (only 13.3% of people 18+ have received one dose). Florida, home to the next greatest number of Walmart associates (n=103,550), doesn't fare much better, with only 15.4% of people 18+ having received one dose.⁴³

Even though they are at higher risk of COVID exposure, retail employees in many states — including Texas and Florida — were ineligible for early access to vaccines. While many states have opened up access to people 16+, these states missed a crucial opportunity to protect the health of these essential workers by making them eligible for vaccine access early on in their states' distribution. Obtaining and registering for vaccination appointments has posed well-documented challenges for many as well. As a result, those most in need have the least access, even when they are eligible.^{44,45}

While vaccine distribution is picking up and new vaccines are being released, the rise of novel coronavirus strains, including those that are more infectious and possibly unresponsive to the current vaccines, threaten progress toward recovery.⁴⁶ Developing and administering boosters to manage these strains will take time, and many US residents are not expected to receive the vaccine until 2022.⁴⁷

Walmart associates need immediate access to adequate paid sick time in order to take time away from work if needed to quarantine and recover, especially with the increasing instance of more infectious virus strains. Employees also need paid sick time to schedule and make vaccine appointments, and to also take their loved ones to these appointments, which Walmart is currently not in support of. In fact, they have asked associates to “plan to do so during their time off work.”⁴⁸

COVID-19 is not the last pandemic we'll confront as a nation. Paid sick time offers a permanent and sustainable solution to help us collectively weather future public health crises.⁴⁹

Paid sick time reduces ER visits and increases preventative care use

Paid sick time laws are associated with numerous positive health outcomes.⁵⁰ Researchers have found that employers need to provide a minimum of 10 days, or 80 hours, of paid sick time to see health benefits.¹¹

Paid sick time is important for employees to seek preventative care. For example, a greater proportion of employees receiving paid sick time from their jobs receive mammography screenings, pap tests, endoscopies, and annual physical checkups.⁵¹ Employees who can access preventative care are less likely to delay care and use acute services when they have paid sick time. For example, employees with paid sick time are 32% less likely to visit the ER compared to those without paid sick time.⁵² Remarkably, research shows that lack of paid sick time can be a more significant barrier to seeking care than health insurance or income level.^{24,53,54}

Employees who have access to paid sick time report better health, and longitudinal research indicates that work-based paid sick time is associated with a 22% lower risk of all-cause mortality after almost five years, and 10% lower risk after about ten years.^{53,55} In one study, employees with paid sick time were 24% less at risk of death due to heart disease, and 35% less at risk of death due to unintentional injury.⁵⁵

Researchers are beginning to explore the benefits of paid sick time on additional outcomes. For example, employees with paid sick time have less trouble falling and staying asleep than those without paid sick time.⁵⁶ In addition, they report lower levels of psychological distress versus those without paid sick time, and these employees were almost 1.5 times more likely to report that the distress interfered significantly with their life.⁵⁷ Finally, employees with paid sick time are less likely to suffer nonfatal occupational injuries — the odds of a non-fatal injury were almost 30% lower among those with paid time access versus those without.⁵⁸

The positive impacts of paid sick time extend to employees' families and communities. Children whose parents have paid sick time are more likely to be current on their healthcare needs, like receiving their annual flu vaccine and well-child checkup. Additionally, children of parents with paid sick time are less likely to receive delayed health care. They also have fewer average ER visits and are less likely to be taken to the ER altogether.⁵⁹

Employers benefit from paid sick time policies across many indicators

Because of stark inequities in access to paid sick time, a universal paid sick time policy is expected to reduce health disparities affecting women, people of color, and working-class families — and thus should be considered a critical component of any employer’s commitment to racial justice and equity.⁵⁰

Additionally, cost-benefit analyses show that the benefits of paid sick time far outweigh the costs. Paid sick time is an affordable and powerful policy that contributes to health and economic gains for workers, as well as employers.⁶⁰⁻⁶² Specifically, paid sick time policies increase loyalty and morale, and decrease turnover, presenteeism, and absenteeism — all resulting in better employee retention and productivity.^{50,63,64}

Because paid sick time reduces the likelihood of delayed care and hospital ER visits, both public and private sectors save millions of dollars that would have otherwise been spent on health care.^{54,63}

With access to paid sick time, Walmart workers can “live better lives,” too

Paid sick time is an evidence-based solution to control the COVID-19 pandemic and preserve the health of the public, beyond the pandemic.⁶⁵ It has the power to save lives — more than 130 Walmart associates’ lives would have been saved if Walmart had an effective paid sick time policy in place, and more than 7,618 fewer associates would have gotten sick with COVID-19.

Specifically, paid sick time policies increase loyalty and morale, and decrease turnover, presenteeism, and absenteeism — all resulting in better employee retention and productivity.

“I want to ask our chief executive, Doug McMillon, why we can afford to hand over so much money to the wealthiest family in America, but we can’t provide our associates with adequate paid sick leave and health care.”

—Walmart associate

Among those most impacted by lack of access to paid sick time are women, Black, Latinx, and part-time Walmart associates — many of whom are negatively impacted by Walmart’s policies.^{30,66-68} Given the long path to recovery from the COVID-19 public health crisis, the time is now for Walmart to implement a more expansive universal paid sick time policy for all of its employees.



#AlwaysEssential: paid sick time is an effective, sustainable, and permanent solution to collectively support public health through the pandemic and beyond.

AUTHORED BY

Sukhdip Purewal Boparai, MPH
Lili Farhang, MPH
Martha Ockenfels-Martinez, MPH

EDITED BY

Jamie Sarfeh

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research brief could not have been written without the expertise and guidance of Bianca Agustin, Doyle Canning, and Eddie Iny at United For Respect.

We appreciate Nirmala Nataraj for copyediting, and Sabiha Basrai and Riley Corrigan-Gibbs at Design Action Collective, for graphic design and report artwork. All report photographs are courtesy of United for Respect. Cover page photo by David Santiago/Miami Herald/Tribune News Service via Getty Images.

We are deeply grateful to Blue Shield of California Foundation for their ongoing funding and support — without them, this work would not be possible. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Blue Shield of California Foundation.

ABOUT HUMAN IMPACT PARTNERS

Human Impact Partners (HIP) transforms the field of public health to center equity and builds collective power with social justice movements.

Suggested citation: Human Impact Partners. Walmart’s role in the COVID-19 pandemic: How lack of paid sick time prolongs the pandemic and increases mortality. April 2021. Oakland, CA.

If you have any questions about the research, please connect with Sukhdip Purewal Boparai, Human Impact Partners, [**sukh@humanimpact.org**](mailto:sukh@humanimpact.org).

References

1. Isham K. Walmart Inc. Shareholder Proposal of Organization United for Respect et al. Securities Exchange Act of 1934 - Rule 14a-8. Published online February 1, 2021.
2. Sommers BD, Coburn BE. Prescribing Paid Sick Leave—An Important Tool for Primary Care During the Pandemic. *JAMA*. 2020;324(4):324-325. doi:10.1001/jama.2020.12209
3. A Better Balance. Emergency Paid Sick Leave Tracker: State, City, and County Developments. Published online May 26, 2020. <https://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-PSL-Tracker-5.26.20.pdf>
4. Workplace Fairness. State and Local Paid Sick Leave Laws. <https://www.workplacefairness.org/paid-sick-leave>
5. U.S. Department of Labor. Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Paid Leave Rights. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-employee-paid-leave>
6. Kopasker D, Montagna C, Bender KA. Economic insecurity: A socioeconomic determinant of mental health. *SSM - Popul Health*. 2018;6:184-194. doi:10.1016/j.ssmph.2018.09.006
7. Catalano RC. The health effects of economic security. *Am J Public Health*. 1991;81(9):1148-1152.
8. Walmart. U.S. COVID-19 Related Information. As of February 18, 2021. Published online 2021. https://corporate.walmart.com/media-library/document/us-covid-19-related-information-feb-2021/_proxyDocument?id=00000177-b50e-d0dc-af7f-ffaf21fd0000#:~:text=Associates%20can%20earn%20up%20to,time%20carries%20over%20each%20year.
9. Majority Action. Inadequate Response to COVID-19 and Breakdown of Board Oversight Demonstrate the Need for Hourly Associate Representation on the Walmart (WMT) Board of Directors. Published online 2020. https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/104169/000138713120005057/mja-px14a6g_052120.htm
10. United For Respect. Notice of Exempt Solicitation. Published online 2020. https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/104169/000138713120005057/mja-px14a6g_052120.htm
11. DeRigne L, Stoddard-Dare P, Quinn LM, Collins C. How Many Paid Sick Days Are Enough? *J Occup Environ Med*. 2018;60(6):481-489. doi:10.1097/JOM.0000000000001300
12. Walmart. New COVID-19 Policy to Support the Health of Our Associates. Corporate - US. Published 2020. <https://corporate.walmart.com/newsroom/2020/03/10/new-covid-19-policy-to-support-the-health-of-our-associates>
13. Kwame Raoul. Walmart's Sick Leave and COVID-19 Reporting Policies. Published online June 2020. https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/attachments/press-docs/2020_06_02%20Walmart%20Multi-state%20ltr%20w%20signatures.pdf
14. Human Impact Partners, California Work & Family Coalition. *Understanding Working and Caregiving: An Analysis of California's Paid Family Leave.*; 2018. <https://humanimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/PFL-caregiver-report.10.01.18.pdf>
15. W. Smith T, Kim J. *Paid Sick Days: Attitudes and Experiences*. National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago for the Public Welfare Foundation Publication; 2010:44. Accessed February 26, 2021. <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-sick-days/paid-sick-days-attitudes-and-experiences.pdf>
16. Zhai Y, Santibanez TA, Kahn KE, Black CL, de Perio MA. Paid sick leave benefits, influenza vaccination, and taking sick days due to influenza-like illness among U.S. workers. *Vaccine*. 2018;36(48):7316-7323. doi:10.1016/j.vaccine.2018.10.039
17. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Table 1. Workers with access to paid leave by selected characteristics, averages for the periods 2011 and 2017-2018. Economic News Release. Published August 2019. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/leave.t01.htm>

18. US Census Bureau. A Profile of the Retail Workforce. Retail Jobs Among the Most Common Occupations. United States Census Bureau. Published September 2020. <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/09/profile-of-the-retail-workforce.html>
19. Desilver D. *As Coronavirus Spreads, Which U.S. Workers Have Paid Sick Leave – and Which Don't?* Pew Research Center; 2020. Accessed February 26, 2021. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/03/12/as-coronavirus-spreads-which-u-s-workers-have-paid-sick-leave-and-which-dont/>
20. Kumar S, Quinn SC, Kim KH, Daniel LH, Freimuth VS. The Impact of Workplace Policies and Other Social Factors on Self-Reported Influenza-Like Illness Incidence During the 2009 H1N1 Pandemic. *Am J Public Health*. 2012;102(1):134-140. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2011.300307
21. Walmart. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Published 2021. <https://corporate.walmart.com/global-responsibility/diversity-equity-and-inclusion>
22. United For Respect. United for Respect at Walmart: Whose Walmart? OUR Walmart. United for Respect. Published 2021. <https://united4respect.org/campaigns/walmart/>
23. Chicago Sun Times. Here's a list of the largest employer in every state. Published 2019. Accessed April 6, 2021. <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2019/3/30/18395895/here-s-a-list-of-the-largest-employer-in-every-state>
24. DeRigne L, Stoddard-Dare P, Quinn L. Workers Without Paid Sick Leave Less Likely To Take Time Off For Illness Or Injury Compared To Those With Paid Sick Leave. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 2016;35(3):520-527. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2015.0965
25. CDC. 2009 H1N1 Pandemic. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Published 2019. Accessed April 6, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/2009-h1n1-pandemic.html>
26. National Partnership for Women & Families. *Paid Sick Days Improve Public Health*. National Partnership for Women & Families; 2020. Accessed February 25, 2021. <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-sick-days/paid-sick-days-improve-our-public-health.pdf>
27. Pichler S, Ziebarth NR. *The Pros and Cons of Sick Pay Schemes: Testing for Contagious Presenteeism and Noncontagious Absenteeism Behavior*. National Bureau of Economic Research; 2016. doi:10.3386/w22530
28. Bodas M, Peleg K. Self-Isolation Compliance In The COVID-19 Era Influenced By Compensation: Findings From A Recent Survey In Israel. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 2020;39(6):936-941. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00382
29. Piper K, Youk A, Iii AEJ, Kumar S. Paid sick days and stay-at-home behavior for influenza. *PLOS ONE*. 2017;12(2):e0170698. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0170698
30. The Center for Popular Democracy, Fair Workweek Initiative, United For Respect. *Trapped in Part-Time. Walmart's Phantom Ladder of Opportunity*. <https://united4respect.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Part-Time-Full-Report-Web.pdf>
31. Drago R, Miller K. *Sick at Work: Infected Employees in the Workplace During the H1N1 Pandemic*. Institute for Women's Policy Research; 2010:14.
32. Pichler S, Wen K, Ziebarth NR. Positive Health Externalities of Mandating Paid Sick Leave. *J Policy Anal Manage*. Published online February 5, 2021:pam.22284. doi:10.1002/pam.22284
33. Kumar S, Grefenstette JJ, Galloway D, Albert SM, Burke DS. Policies to Reduce Influenza in the Workplace: Impact Assessments Using an Agent-Based Model. *Am J Public Health*. 2013;103(8):1406-1411. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2013.301269
34. University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. *H. University of Wisconsin Population of Health Institute*; 2021.

35. UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. COVID-19 in vulnerable communities: an examination of race and ethnicity in Los Angeles and New York City | Jonathan and Karin Fielding School of Public Health. Published July 2020. <https://ph.ucla.edu/news/press-release/2020/jul/covid-19-vulnerable-communities-examination-race-and-ethnicity-los>
36. Chen Y-H, Glymour M, Riley A, et al. *Excess Mortality Associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic among Californians 18–65 Years of Age, by Occupational Sector and Occupation: March through October 2020*. *Occupational and Environmental Health*; 2021. doi:10.1101/2021.01.21.21250266
37. Nassauer S. Walmart's Coronavirus Challenge Is Just Staying Open. *Wall Street Journal*. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/walmarts-coronavirus-challenge-is-just-staying-open-11587221657>. Published April 2020.
38. United For Respect. Are you safe at work? Accessed April 7, 2021. <https://areyousafe.work/>
39. Walmart. Location Facts. Accessed April 6, 2021. <https://corporate.walmart.com/our-story/locations/united-states>
40. Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. COVID-19 Projections. Published 2021. <https://covid19.healthdata.org/global?view=total-deaths&tab=trend>
41. Statista. U.S. COVID-19 case rate by state. Statista. Published 2021. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1109004/coronavirus-covid19-cases-rate-us-americans-by-state/>
42. United States Census Bureau. U.S. and World Population Clock. Published 2021. <https://www.census.gov/popclock/>
43. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. COVID Data Tracker. COVID-19 Vaccinations in the United States. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Published 2021. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker>
44. Ovide S. The Problem With Vaccine Websites. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/12/technology/the-problem-with-vaccine-websites.html>. Published January 12, 2021. Accessed April 6, 2021.
45. Kaiser Family Foundation. New Analysis: Updated State Data Continues To Show Wide Disparities in COVID-19 Vaccination Rates by Race/Ethnicity. Published 2021. Accessed April 6, 2021. <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/press-release/new-analysis-updated-state-data-continues-to-show-wide-disparities-in-covid-19-vaccination-rates-by-race-ethnicity/>
46. Bollinger R. New Variants of Coronavirus: What You Should Know. Published 2021. Accessed April 6, 2021. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/a-new-strain-of-coronavirus-what-you-should-know>
47. Allassan F. Fauci: Children “very likely” to get COVID vaccine at start of 2022. *Axios*. Accessed April 6, 2021. <https://www.axios.com/covid-vaccine-fauci-children-2022-likely-1313a4ea-d6ff-4c62-b11a-c7950cc33dc7.html>
48. Golden A. Grocery, general stores facilitate vaccinations for employees. *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*. <https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2021/mar/14/grocery-general-stores-facilitate-vaccinations/>. Published March 2021. Accessed April 6, 2021.
49. Tollefson J. Why deforestation and extinctions make pandemics more likely. *Nature*. 2020;584(7820):175-176. doi:10.1038/d41586-020-02341-1
50. County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. Paid sick leave laws. County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. Published June 3, 2020. Accessed February 26, 2021. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/paid-sick-leave-laws>
51. Peipins 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. doi:10.1186/1471-2458-12-520

52. Bhuyan SS, Wang Y, Bhatt J, et al. Paid sick leave is associated with fewer ED visits among US private sector working adults. *Am J Emerg Med.* 2016;34(5):784-789. doi:10.1016/j.ajem.2015.12.089
53. Cook WK. Paid Sick Days and Health Care Use. *Am J Ind Med.* 2011;54(10):771-779. doi:10.1002/ajim.20988
54. Williams C. *Paid Sick Days in Philadelphia Would Lower Health Care Costs by Reducing Unnecessary Emergency Department Visits.* Institute for Women's Policy Research; 2013. Accessed February 26, 2021. <https://iwpr.org/iwpr-general/paid-sick-days-in-philadelphia-would-lower-health-care-costs-by-reducing-unnecessary-emergency-department-visits/>
55. Kim D. Paid Sick Leave and Risks of All-Cause and Cause-Specific Mortality among Adult Workers in the USA. *Int J Environ Res Public Health.* 2017;14(10). doi:10.3390/ijerph14101247
56. Collins C, DeRigne L, Bai R, Stoddard Dare P. Paid Sick Leave and Sleep: An Analysis of US Adult Workers. *J Occup Environ Med.* 2020;62(8):566-573. doi:10.1097/JOM.0000000000001884
57. Stoddard-Dare P, DeRigne L, Collins CC, Quinn LM, Fuller K. Paid sick leave and psychological distress: An analysis of U.S. workers. *Am J Orthopsychiatry.* 2018;88(1):1-9. doi:10.1037/ort0000293
58. Asfaw A, Pana-Cryan R, Rosa R. Paid Sick Leave and Nonfatal Occupational Injuries. *Am J Public Health.* 2012;102(9):e59-e64. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2011.300482
59. Asfaw A, Colopy M. Association between Parental Access to Paid Sick Leave and Children's Access to and Use of Healthcare Services. *Am J Ind Med.* 2017;60(3):276-284. doi:10.1002/ajim.22692
60. Scheil-Adlung X, Sandner L. *The Case for Paid Sick Leave.* World Health Organization; 2010.
61. Miller K. *San Francisco Employment Growth Remains Stronger with Paid Sick Days Law Than Surrounding Counties.* Institute for Women's Policy Research; 2011. Accessed March 5, 2021. <https://iwpr.org/job-quality-income-security/san-francisco-employment-growth-remains-stronger-with-paid-sick-days-law-than-surrounding-counties/>
62. National Partnership for women & families. *Paid Sick Days Are Good for Business.* National Partnership for Women & Families; 2020. Accessed March 5, 2021. <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-sick-days/paid-sick-days-good-for-business-and-workers.pdf>
63. Watkins M. *Evaluating Paid Sick Leave: Social, Economic and Health Implications for Washington.* Economic Opportunity Institute; 2013.
64. Asfaw A, Rosa R, Pana-Cryan R. Potential Economic Benefits of Paid Sick Leave in Reducing Absenteeism Related to the Spread of Influenza-Like Illness. *J Occup Environ Med.* 2017;59(9):822-829. doi:10.1097/JOM.0000000000001076
65. Trust for America's Health. 55 Organizations Call for Passage and Fast Implementation of Paid Sick Leave for all Workers as a Critical Part of COVID-19 Response. Published 2021. <https://www.tfah.org/article/55-organizations-call-for-passage-and-fast-implementation-of-paid-sick-leave-for-all-workers-as-a-critical-part-of-covid-19-response/>
66. Nassauer S. WSJ News Exclusive | Walmart Likely Discriminated Against Female Store Workers, EEOC Finds. *Wall Street Journal.* <https://www.wsj.com/articles/walmart-likely-discriminated-against-female-store-workers-eeoc-finds-11568723935>. Published September 2019. Accessed April 6, 2021.
67. Yousef O. Complaints Allege Racist Hiring Practices At Walmart Warehouse. NPR.org. Published April 2019. <https://www.npr.org/local/309/2019/04/22/716144085/complaints-allege-racist-hiring-practices-at-walmart-warehouse>
68. Goodjobsfirst.org. *Big Business Bias. Employment Discrimination and Sexual Harassment at Large Corporations.* Good Jobs First; 2019. <https://www.goodjobsfirst.org/sites/default/files/docs/pdfs/BigBusinessBias.pdf>

Appendix

Table 1. Estimated number of cases among Walmart associates due to paid sick time policy

GEOGRAPHY	#WALMART ASSOCIATES ^A	CASES/ 100,000 ^B	CASE RATE ^C	#WALMART ASSOCIATE CASES ^D	#CASES PREVENTED DUE TO PAID SICK TIME ^E
United States	1,442,569	8801	0.08801	126,960.498	7618
Texas	158,361	9079	0.09079	14,377.595	863
Florida	103,550	8811	0.08811	9,123.791	547
California	90,562	8996	0.08996	8,146.958	489
Georgia	58,555	9394	0.09394	5,500.657	330
North Carolina	53,619	8133	0.08133	4,360.833	262

a = #Walmart associates as of February 1, 2021 Data source:

b = Projected cases/100,000 as of February 26, 2021, for states were found through [Statista](#). The national-level case rate was calculated using raw #cases as of February 26, 2021, from [Statista](#), divided by the US population size according to the [US Population Clock](#).

c = Case rate is calculated as cases divided by 100,000.

d = #Walmart associate cases are calculated as the #Walmart workers x case rate by geography.

e = Pichler (2016) indicates that paid sick time will reduce cases due to contagion by 6%. We multiplied 0.06 x #Walmart associate cases to determine # cases prevented, and rounded the number to the next greatest whole number.

Table 2. Estimated number of Walmart associate lives saved due to paid sick time policy

GEOGRAPHY	#WALMART ASSOCIATES ^A	PROJECTED DEATHS/100,000 ^B	DEATH RATE ^C	#WALMART ASSOCIATE DEATHS ^D	#LIVES SAVED DUE TO PAID SICK TIME ^E
United States	1,442,569	154.03	0.0015403	2,221.989	133
Texas	158,361	151.81	0.0015181	240.408	14
Florida	103,550	144.81	0.0014481	149.951	9
California	90,562	127.48	0.0012748	115.448	7
Georgia	58,555	162.61	0.0016261	95.216	6
North Carolina	53,619	105.48	0.0010548	56.557	3

a = #Walmart associates as of February 1, 2021. Data source:

b = Projected deaths/100,000 as of February 26, 2021, according to national and state-level COVID-19 Projections, [Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation](#).

c = Death rate is calculated as projected deaths divided by 100,000.

d = #Walmart associate deaths are calculated as the #Walmart workers x death rate by geography.

e = Pichler (2016) indicates that paid sick time will reduce death due to contagion by 6%. We multiplied 0.06 x #Walmart associate deaths to determine #lives saved and rounded to the next greatest whole number.

