

IMPORTANT COVID-19 UPDATE

PRESIDENT SIGNS THE “FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT” INTO LAW

Last evening, the President signed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (“the Act”) into law. Below is a summary of the law as it pertains to employers:

No Employee Costs for Coronavirus Testing

Private health plans, Medicare, Medicaid, Medicare Advantage and other public insurance plans have to cover testing for COVID-19 and related hospital or physicians’ office visits at no cost to consumers with no prior authorization. This applies to insured and self-funded plans.

Family and Sick Leave Benefits

Employers with *less* than 500 employees will be required to provide more comprehensive paid sick and family leave benefits related to COVID-19. The benefits will be paid by the federal government using refundable tax credits within three months. The details of this include:

- The sick leave provision includes two weeks of fully paid leave to self-quarantine or seek treatment or testing for COVID-19 and two weeks at two-thirds pay to care for a child if schools or child care facilities are closed.
- The family leave provision allows workers to take at least 10 weeks of leave at minimally two-thirds original pay after a two-week unpaid period.
- The Department of Labor may exempt companies with less than 50 employees, healthcare workers and first responders from the requirements. Employers can also choose on their own to exempt healthcare workers and emergency responders.

The bill also appropriates \$1 billion to states for unemployment insurance expansion, increased Medicaid funding and additional nutritional services for low-income Americans, particularly students who ordinarily receive subsidized meals at school.

It will important for employers to connect with their “leave” administrators (if applicable) and more importantly their employment law professionals who can assist with the implementation and set up of the new leave requirements. Health Plans and TPAs will universally implement the waiving of cost sharing for testing and care as noted above. Conner Strong & Buckelew will continue to share updates on these major regulatory issues as they unfold.

Please call your Conner Strong & Buckelew account representative with any questions and be sure to visit our [COVID-19 Resource Center](#) for additional information.

