



# ABSENCE ADVISORY

REGULATORY UPDATES FROM  
AFLAC'S GROUP LIFE, ABSENCE AND  
DISABILITY SOLUTIONS DIVISION



JUNE 2026

We are pleased to share the June 2026 Absence Advisory, along with information related to state and other paid leave legislation.

## TOP NEWS INSIDE

- [Maryland](#)

- [Massachusetts](#)

- [Virginia](#)

## MARYLAND

Maryland's Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) regulations for [Chapters 1-5](#) have been published in the Code of Maryland's Regulations. The total contribution rate for 2027 is 0.9% of an employee's wages, not to exceed 1.2% of wages, up to the Social Security wage cap. This rate will be equally divided between employees and employers with 15 or more total employees. Smaller employers (fewer than 15 employees) are exempt from the employer's portion of the [contributions](#).

Aflac Group Life, Absence and Disability Solutions will host a webinar on Maryland's FAMLI on June 18 at 11:30 a.m. EDT.

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Explain the coverage under the Maryland FAMLI program
- Summarize the timeline for contributions, Equivalent Private Insurance Plan Declaration of Intent applications and reports
- Identify actions employers should take

You can register [here](#). A recording will be shared with all registered participants. Questions may be submitted in advance during registration.

## MASSACHUSETTS

Beginning July 1, employers may apply for a private plan exemption or renewal for Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) in the new [PFML employer portal](#) instead of applying through MassTaxConnect. Employers must create a new account in the PFML employer portal to submit requests, view application status, confirm current exemptions and receive communications. The DFML will provide additional details before July 1 to ensure a streamlined process.

## VIRGINIA

On April 22, Gov. Abigail Spanberger signed legislation ([Virginia House Bill No. 1207](#)) to create a paid family and medical leave (PFML) program for Virginia employees. Virginia is the first Southern state to enact a mandatory PFML program. The program will be administered by the Virginia Employer Commission, and all rules and regulations must be promulgated by April 1, 2028.

Program overview:

- The program will provide up to 12 weeks of paid leave per year for eligible employees to care for their own serious health condition, to bond with a new child, to care for a family member with a serious health condition and for reasons related to a qualifying exigency.
- Employees may take up to four of the 12 weeks for safe leave as well.
- Employees may receive 80% of their average weekly wage as their weekly benefit amount.
- The maximum benefit amount is equal to the state average weekly wage.
- The minimum benefit amount is \$100 per week. If an employee earns less than \$100 per week, their benefit will be 100% of their average weekly wage.
- No waiting period is required to receive benefits.

- Leave may be taken on a continuous or intermittent basis.
- Employees may take leave to care for themselves or their child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, sibling, grandchild, grandparent or an individual who resides in their home and depends on them for care.
- Employees may begin receiving benefits on Dec. 1, 2028.

#### Contributions:

- Contributions to the program will begin on April 1, 2028.
- Employers with more than 10 employees may split contributions equally with their employees.
- Employers with 10 or fewer employees are not required to contribute to the program but must remit the employees' portion of the contribution amount.
- The rates for contributions will be announced by Oct. 1, 2027.

#### Employee eligibility and notice:

- An employee must work in Virginia and must be authorized to work in the U.S.
- An employee must meet the financial eligibility requirements established by the state.
- Employees should provide notice of leave to their employer as soon as practicable.

#### Job protection:

- Employees are entitled to job protection once they have been employed with their employer for at least 120 days prior to the start of their leave.
- Upon returning from leave, employees must be restored to their previous position or to a position with equivalent benefits, pay and other terms and conditions of employment.
- Employers must continue any health care benefits during the employee's leave; however, employees must continue to pay premiums for their health care benefits while on leave.

#### What employers need to know:

- Employers with at least one employee in Virginia, not including employees of the federal or state government, must participate in the program.
- Self-employed individuals are not subject to the program but may opt in to it.
- Employers may participate in the state program or apply for a private plan with an approved carrier, which may be fully insured or self-insured and must be renewed every two years.
- Employers with employees in Virginia must post the workplace notice in English, Spanish and any language that is spoken by at least 5% of their workforce in addition to providing the notice during an employee's time of hire, to all Virginia employees annually and at the time that an employee files for a leave that qualifies for Virginia PFML.
- Employers should begin to review their written materials, absence policies and payroll systems to prepare for the new contributions and leaves of absence, as Virginia PFML may run concurrently with FMLA and other employer-provided benefits, such as short-term disability or parental leave.

We will keep you updated as additional information becomes available. The Virginia Employment Commission will be setting up a website, but for now you can access more information [here](#).



These are educational materials only. Employers should consult their own counsel for obligations for state-mandated leave and disability programs. Products and services are provided by Continental American Insurance Company. In New York, products and services are provided by American Family Life Assurance Company of New York. In California, coverage is offered by Continental American Life Insurance Company. Products may not be available in all states and may vary depending on state law.

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