



***NATIONAL UNION OF PUBLIC  
AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES***

B. C. Government and Service Employees' Union  
Health Sciences Association of British Columbia  
Health Sciences Association of Alberta  
Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union  
Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union  
Ontario Public Service Employees Union  
Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers  
New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees  
Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union  
PEI Union of Public Sector Employees  
Newfoundland & Labrador Association  
of Public and Private Employees

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# Collective Bargaining Series for Women

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## #3 Short-Term Family Illness Leave

## BARGAINING FOR SHORT-TERM FAMILY ILLNESS LEAVE

**Since you asked. This is why short-term family illness leave is important.**

EVERY DAY there are thousands of Canadian workers who are forced to lie, take time off without pay and even risk their jobs just because they want to take care of their families. Juggling work and family responsibilities is one of the greatest challenges facing today's workers. The struggle to balance work and family responsibilities can affect a person's health, work performance and career opportunities.

Women tend to be disproportionately affected by this conflict since they still often bear the majority of family care and household responsibilities, no matter what employment situation exists. The difficulties are further complicated for employed single mothers, who are much likelier to earn a low income and, therefore, to fall below the poverty line.

Negotiating good strong contract language around short-term family illness leave helps workers to fulfill their dual responsibilities – to be both a responsible worker and a responsible family member.

Short-term family illness leave is usually either paid or compensated through the use of sick leave credits. Generally, it applies to the immediate family although this can be applied more or less broadly depending on the language in the Collective Agreement. It's often the case that short-term leave for family illness depends on the employee being the only person available to provide care.

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## PUT IT ON THE TABLE

Easing family responsibilities. Effective contract language makes the difference.

Collective Agreement between the Government of Prince Edward Island and the Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees (PEIUPSE / NUPGE) 1998-2001:

*Subject to Article 24.13.3, leave with pay shall be granted to employees under the following circumstances: up to five (5) days per fiscal year where no one other than the employee can provide for the medical needs of a member of his/her immediate family during illness.*

Collective Agreement between the Government of British Columbia and the British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU / NUPGE) 1998-2001:

*In the case of illness of a child of an employee, and when no one at the employee's home other than the employee can provide for the needs of the ill child, the employee shall be entitled, after notifying his or her supervisor, to up to a maximum of two days' paid leave at any one time for this purpose. Where it is not possible to schedule medical and/or dental appointments outside regularly scheduled working hours, reasonable time off for medical and dental appointments for employees or for dependent children shall be permitted, but where any such absence exceeds two (2) hours, the full-time absence shall be charged to the entitlement described in Clause 20.13 (maximum leave entitlement – 10 days per year).*

Collective Agreement between the Government of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU / NUPGE):

*In the case of illness of a member of an employee's immediate family, meaning spouse, son, daughter, or parent, for whose needs no one except the employee can provide, the employee may be granted, after notifying his*

*Deputy Head or delegated official, leave with pay up to a maximum of five (5) days per annum. This leave is for the employee to provide for the temporary care of the employee's immediate family and for reasonable time to make alternate care arrangements. The Deputy head may require proof of the need for such leave as he/she considers necessary. Such leave shall not be unreasonably withheld.*

## THE NATIONAL WAY

Helping you set the table. Helping you get a better deal at work.

- Describing why it's necessary. Your National Union researches, analyzes and challenges the reasons for bargaining this issue. We look at possible alternative approaches which might be preferable or more beneficial to our members. The National Union and its Working Groups are in touch with our members' needs, explore various options for addressing these needs, and track national and provincial developments in this area.

- Communicating your rights province-by-province. Connecting with its members about their rights at work is a big part of what your National Union does. Publications. Leaflets. Posters. Buttons. Videos. We produce a stream of these materials. What you need to know about your rights. When you need to know it. We're always ready to help.

- Providing union education and training. Working with our component education officers, the National Union develops and delivers union education and training courses designed to deepen our members' understanding of issues like this one. These courses provide advice and support to frontline workers who must deal with issues like this on a day-to-day basis in their workplace.

- Campaigning: from silence to voice. Your National Union is a campaigning union. We coordinate national campaigns on vital workplace issues like this one. We work with other national and provincial organizations active in this field to identify and distribute resource material to workplaces. We work hard to make sure your voice is heard by the larger policy community.

- Negotiating a strong deal. Everything your National Union does is characterized by its commitment to the development and furthering of our main organizational goal of ensuring that strong collective agreements are negotiated and enforced on your behalf. We help our components develop the best negotiating resource materials, contract language, and strategies to defend our members and the services they provide.

## GET OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

More information is just one click or call away. Check it out.

The **National Union's Advisory Committee on Women's Issues** has produced a ground-breaking booklet called, **Keep Your Crumbs. We Want The Whole Loaf.** It deals with a variety of women's struggles in the labour movement and it speaks of the need to be vigilant and not allow issues such as this one to be pushed to the background. The material also speaks of our Union's victories in the areas of collective bargaining, organizing, and broader public policy issues.

To obtain copies of this material, the PEIUPSE/NUPGE, BCGEU/NUPGE, or NSGEU/NUPGE Collective Agreements, or if you need further information please contact the National Union at:

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