

2025

# Aflac Time Away Study

## Insights for employers



### DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly 3 in 4 employees experience workplace stress or anxiety while covering for a co-worker.

Employees' mental well-being dropped 11 percentage points (71% to 60%) while covering for a co-worker, and physical well-being dropped 7 percentage points (72% to 65%).

*The Aflac Time Away Study reveals the impacts of time away/leave (two-plus weeks) programs on the employees who are covering for co-workers on leave.*

### IMPACTS ON MENTAL AND PHYSICAL WELL-BEING



**73% of employees** experienced at least moderate workplace stress or anxiety while covering for a co-worker.

**41% of employees** experienced burnout when a co-worker's leave period extended beyond eight weeks.

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**18% of employees** say a preexisting condition worsened while covering for a co-worker on leave.

**27% of employees** who were diagnosed with a new health condition during or after their coverage period attributed it to the increased workload.

**67% of those newly diagnosed** with a health condition while covering for a co-worker took time off to care for themselves.



## RECOGNITION BY GENERATION AND INDUSTRY



About half of baby boomers and Gen X indicate they did not receive any recognition for covering for a co-worker on leave while about **1 in 4 Gen Z and millennials** say they did receive recognition.

**One-third of Gen Z** report a pay increase or additional paid time off for covering for a co-worker on leave, and millennials most often report a gift or one-time bonus.

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Of the top five industries responding, **education, health care and manufacturing businesses** are the least likely to recognize their employees for covering for a co-worker on leave.



**Education (37%), health care (37%), manufacturing (38%) and retail (28%) employees** are more likely to report receiving no additional recognition for covering for a co-worker on leave.

**One-third of tech/IT employees** report receiving a gift/incentive for covering for a co-worker on leave.

**36% of manufacturing employers** report being able to send a note of appreciation or public thank you to employees for covering for a co-worker on leave, but only **11% of employees** in this industry report receiving this type of recognition.

## AWARENESS AND SUPPORT



**8 in 10 leaders** acknowledge the impact of leave on employees' mental health, and **7 in 10** acknowledge the potential impact on employees' physical health.

While only **5% of leaders** say their organizations do not offer additional support programs, **29% of employees** say they received no additional support while covering for a co-worker.



### About the Study

Aflac's [2025 Time Away Study](#) examines the impacts of time away/leave (two-plus weeks) programs on the workers who are covering for co-workers on leave. To provide a more complete picture of U.S. businesses' leave programs, this year's study includes both employees covering for a co-worker on leave and benefits decision-makers providing the employer perspective.

The data was collected by Kantar Profile Divisions on behalf of Aflac from a national consumer survey of 1,000 respondents who had covered for a co-worker on leave in the past year and 500 benefits decision-makers working for companies that offer leave programs. Fieldwork took place in January 2025. Aflac and Kantar are members of the Insights Association governed by The Insights Association Code of Standards and Ethics for Marketing Research and Data Analytics.

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