



**NEW HAMPSHIRE  
PAID FAMILY  
& MEDICAL LEAVE**



**ANNUAL REPORT  
Implementation  
and Year 1  
2021-2023**

**Department of Administrative Services  
Charles M. Arlinghaus  
Commissioner**

**NH Employment Security  
George N. Copadis  
Commissioner**

# Letter to the Governor, Senate President, and Speaker of the House

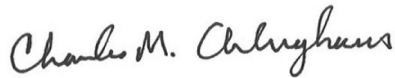
June 1, 2024

The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and NH Employment Security (NHES) are pleased to present to you the first annual report of the New Hampshire Paid Family and Medical Leave Plan (also known as the Granite State Paid Family Leave Plan), as required by House Bill 2, (Chapter 91, Laws of 2021).

The passage of House Bill 2 on June 25, 2021 established the Granite State Paid Family Leave Plan, now known as the New Hampshire Paid Family and Medical Leave Plan (NH PFML), and gave DAS and NHES the responsibility for implementing the plan by January 1, 2023.

This report provides an overview of the NH PFML plan and a review of the milestones achieved by the NH PFML team to date. It also summarizes calendar year 2023 employer and worker participation in the first year of the plan, activities that were conducted to raise awareness, and claims that were filed through December 31, 2023.

Respectfully Submitted,



Charles M. Arlinghaus  
Commissioner  
Department of Administrative Services



George N. Copadis  
Commissioner  
NH Employment Security

CC: Senate President Jeb Bradley  
House Speaker Sherman Packard

*"We've been waiting for some time for a paid family medical leave capability for our small company. Even with only 25 people, life happens, and has happened for us. Knowing that our employees will be able to take time to bond with a new child or take care of an elderly parent without also worrying about paying bills or feeding their families will help make these stressful situations a little less stressful. The cost of the program is very reasonable and allows us to offer PFML as a company paid benefit, which we feel is an incentive for attracting and keeping quality employees."*

Val Zanchuk, President/Owner  
Graphicast, Inc.  
Jaffrey, NH

## NH PFML Plan Overview

The enactment of House Bill 2 on June 28, 2021, established the Granite State Paid Family Leave Plan, the first voluntary paid family and medical leave insurance plan in the country. Now known as the New Hampshire Paid Family and Medical Leave Plan (NH PFML), NH PFML is unique in that employers and workers can choose whether to participate. It is not a mandatory plan. NH PFML provides voluntary access to an attractive and low cost benefit to assist NH workers who do not have other comparable benefits when they need to take leave. NH PFML insurance also enables the state to use its purchasing power and tax expenditure authority strategically to establish a marketplace for advantageously priced wage replacement benefits.

NH PFML insurance is offered by MetLife, the state's paid family and medical leave insurance partner, and consists of three coverage plans that are underwritten individually: group insurance for state workers, group insurance for employers that choose to purchase it, and individual insurance for workers who choose to purchase it when their employers do not provide NH PFML insurance or equivalent benefits.

NH permanent state workers are provided paid family leave (PFL) as part of their employee benefit package, making it the base of the plan's risk pool. Employer group plans are individually underwritten; premiums are based on coverage terms and cost factors. Employers may fully fund the cost, share the cost with their workers, or pass the full cost on to their workers. Employers who purchase NH PFML are eligible for a business enterprise tax (BET) credit of up to 50% of the premiums they pay on behalf of their workers. For individuals purchasing insurance coverage on their own, premium and cost is determined during the enrollment process and by law is capped at \$5 per week.

NH PFML insurance is available for purchase by all NH employers and eligible full-time and part-time NH workers. Employers must have a physical location in NH to be eligible for NH PFML insurance. Workers are eligible for coverage if they are designated as working for a NH employer and have their wages reported to NH for unemployment purposes. Employers may purchase a NH PFML group plan and enroll their workers at any time. Enrollment in the individual plan is open for a 60-day period each year.

NH PFML insurance provides 60% wage replacement (up to the Social Security wage cap) for up to six weeks per year for absences from work for covered common life events.

### Base Coverage:

- 60% wage replacement (up to the Social Security wage cap)
- Up to 6 weeks of wage replacement benefits per benefit year
- Full day, reduced schedule, or partial day leaves (minimum of 4-hour increments)
- Up to a 7-day elimination period after which a claim may be paid
- A one-time 7-month waiting period before a claim may be submitted (Individual Plan only)

### Coverage Options for Employers:

- MetLife 12-week coverage plan
- Up to 100% wage replacement benefits (to the Social Security wage cap)

### Qualifying life events:

- To care for one's own serious health condition(s) when disability coverage doesn't apply, including childbirth
- To bond with a child due to birth, adoption or fostering
- To care for a family member with a serious health condition(s)
- To care for a qualifying military service member
- To participate in a qualifying event arising from military deployment or service

## NH PFML Milestones to Date

Despite having a short time span for implementation, the NH PFML Plan launched on time and on budget to provide NH employers and workers an opportunity to purchase coverage.

**Nov 2021:** Contracted with Spring Consulting Group to provide expertise in family and medical leave policy and practice

**May 2022:** Contracted with SilverTech, Inc. for NH PFML website development

**June 2022:**

Governor Sununu issued a press release announcing Executive Council approval of a contract with MetLife to be the State's NH PFML insurance partner

Procured MetLife as the state's NH PFML insurance carrier

Contracted with Mason, Inc. for NH PFML marketing services

**Aug 2022:**

Started outreach and educational campaigns

Launched NH PFML public-facing website ([PaidLeave.nh.gov](http://PaidLeave.nh.gov))

Presented at NH Business and Industry Association meeting to local Chambers of Commerce

**Sept 2022:** Began direct mail campaign to NH employers and insurance brokers

**Oct 2022:**

Opened MetLife Customer Solution Center for NH PFML (1-866-595-PFML) calls

Launched targeted email campaign

**Nov 2022:**

Governor Sununu holds NH PFML press conference announcing plan launch

Initiated social media campaigns

Adoption of administrative rules by the New Hampshire Insurance Department (Ins 8000

Minimum Standards for Family and Medical Leave Wage Replacement Coverage)

**Dec 2022:**

Opened MetLife employer enrollment

Released MetLife's automated quote calculators for employers and workers on the NH PFML website

Posted NH PFML toolkits and resources for employers, workers, and brokers on the NH PFML website

Began radio and print advertising campaigns

**Jan 2023:**

Activated state worker NH PFL coverage

Held open enrollment for individual plan coverage (for Year 1: Jan 2-Mar 2, 2023)

**Feb 2023:**

Started television and billboard advertising campaigns

Began radio interviews

Created data reporting

**Mar 2023:**

Conducted statewide outreach and education presentations to employers (public, private, non-profit)

Sponsored education tables at conferences

**May 2023:** Initiated quality assessment and evaluation processes

**Dec. 2023:** Held open enrollment for individual plan coverage (for Year 2: Dec 1, 2023-Jan 29, 2024)

*"The City of Rochester sees NH PFML as another tool in our tool kit to recruit and retain our workforce. The plan helps employees balance their work and family responsibilities by allowing them to take reasonable leave for certain family and medical reasons."*

Paul Callaghan, Mayor  
City of Rochester

## NH PFML Plan Awareness

DAS and NHES conducted and coordinated many activities to raise awareness about NH PFML so that employers who might benefit from sponsoring NH PFML for their workers and individuals who may be eligible to purchase NH PFML are made aware of the plan.

The social benefits of increasing the rate of PFML coverage across the state of NH include attracting workers to the state; enabling parents to bond with biological, adopted, or foster children; helping to meet the needs of an aging population; promoting workplace stability; and enhancing worker retention and productivity. While many larger employers provide paid PFML benefits through self-insurance or other equivalent benefits, this is not feasible for most mid-sized and smaller businesses.

The NH PFML awareness campaign targeted to employers and workers was initiated in Fall 2023 at the launch of the program and continues to this day. Outreach information explained NH PFML eligibility requirements, benefit structures, the process for accessing coverage, enrolling individuals, and qualifying for the business tax credit in an easy-to-understand format.

Through the NH PFML website, employers and workers can access tool kits or guidebooks, fact sheets, and process documents. Employers can download communication tools such as posters, introductory postcards, and paycheck mailers. All interested parties can download reference material and a NH PFML equivalent plan checklist to help them understand eligibility for NH PFML coverage. In addition, the NHPFML website includes three MetLife webinars, originally attended by over 1,900 people, that separately target the unique information needs of employers, brokers, and workers. Employers and workers can also begin the quote process and be taken to the MetLife website through a single click on the site.

During the year, DAS and NHES created and emailed or mailed flyers and postcards to roughly 50,000 employers, 4,000 brokers and numerous chambers of commerce and business associations to get the word out. Local television ads were run on WMUR, Spectrum, and Effectv channels; newspaper ads were placed in the Union Leader and Hippo; and radio commercials and interviews were launched on WHDQ, WXXK, WNHV, and NHPR. DAS and NHES also used billboards at strategic locations in Manchester, Milton, and Conway, to raise awareness and prompt employers to purchase coverage at any time and individuals to enroll during the individual plan open enrollment period.

DAS and NHES established a social media presence for NH PFML on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and X (formerly known as Twitter) through paid ads and organic posts; issued a press release to introduce the plan and highlight the individual open enrollment periods; showcased NH PFML at several local NH events (e.g., Fisher Cats, Rock'n Road Race, Glendi Greek Heritage Festival), business conferences, (e.g., Granite State Human Resources Conference, BIG I (insurance) Conference, NH Municipal Association Annual Conference, Disability Management Employer Coalition Annual Conference); and presented at educational meetings with local chambers of commerce, business associations, and employers throughout the year.

*“We elected to offer a fully paid 6-week NH PFML plan for our employees on March 1, 2023. We now can provide time off with pay to employees to bond with their babies, to spend time providing care to parents and in-laws who are ill, and to ease the financial burden that can come with our workers managing their own chronic and episodic illness.”*

Jennifer Johnston  
Director of Human Resources  
City of Concord

## NH PFML Plan Participation

NH PFML became effective on January 1, 2023, and completed its first full year of the program with enrollment of 8,862 state workers, 5,372 workers from 217 employer group policyholders, and 478 individuals from 192 employers that purchased coverage. This equates to 2.19% of NH workers from 0.94% of NH employers being covered by NH PFML in year one. (See Table 1)

**Table 1:**

<b>NH Workers and Employers Covered by NH PFML in 2023</b>		
	Number of NH Workers Covered by NH PFML	Number of NH Employers Involved in NH PFML
Group insurance for state employees	8,862	1
Employer sponsored group plan	5,372	217
Individual insurance	478	192
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,712</b>	<b>410</b>
<hr/>		
NH employment	671,301	43,756
Percent of NH employment	2.19%	0.94%

Of the 217 employers that purchased coverage, a little more than half (55.3%) implemented 6-week NH PFML plans versus 12-week plans (44.7%). Most employers (70%) pay 100% of the premium for these plans, versus having the worker pay the full premium (19.4%) or a portion of the premium (10.6%). Fewer employers (37.3%) coordinate NH PFML with Short Term Disability (STD) plans, which demonstrates the need for this benefit among NH workers. Of the 217 policies issued, a greater part of the employers are in the engineering, accounting, research management, or health services industries.

Other than the State of NH as an employer, most employers that are providing NH PFML coverage for their employees are considered small (i.e., having less than 50 NH lives), while more employers that have workers who have purchased individual coverage are large (i.e., having 50 or more NH lives). (See Table 2)

**Table 2:**

<b>Size of NH Employers Involved in NH PFML in 2023</b>		
	Small (less than 50 NH lives)	Large (50 or more NH lives)
Group insurance for state employees	---	1 (100%)
Employer sponsored group plan	180 (82.9%)	37 (17.1%)
Individual insurance	74 (39%)	118 (61%)

The percent of NH workers covered by NH PFML through the state is slightly more female (55.8%) than male (44.2%), while the percent covered by other employers is somewhat more male (55.2%) than the percent of those who are female (43.7%). In contrast, the percent of NH workers covered by NH PFML through individual insurance is more heavily female (77.6%) than male (22.4%). (See Table 3)

**Table 3:**

<b>Gender of NH Workers Covered by NH PFML in 2023</b>			
	Female	Male	Other
Group insurance for state employees	4,942 (55.8%)	3,920 (44.2%)	---
Employer sponsored group plan	2,346 (43.7%)	2,965 (55.2%)	61 (1.1%)
Individual insurance	371 (77.6%)	107 (22.4%)	---

NH workers covered by NH PFML span across many age groups but are more often age 45 or older for the state, and less than age 45 for other employers and workers who have purchased individual coverage. (See Table 4)

**Table 4:**

<b>Age of NH Workers Covered by NH PFML in 2023</b>		
	Less than Age 45	Age 45+
Group insurance for state employees	3,354 (37.8%)	5,508 (62.2%)
Employer sponsored group plan	3,118 (58.0%)	2,253 (41.9%)
Individual insurance	295 (61.7%)	183 (38.3%)

## NH PFML Claim Utilization

As of December 31, 2023, 544 claims were filed by State of NH employees covered through the State plan, by workers with coverage provided by their employer, and by individuals who enrolled directly. More claims were taken for paid family leave (PFL) throughout the year than for paid medical leave (PML). (See Table 5)

**Table 5:**

<b>Type of NH PFML Claims Filed as of December 31, 2023</b>		
	PFL	PML
Group insurance for state employees	89	N/A
Employer sponsored group plan	245	84
Individual insurance	110	16
Total	444	100



More claims were taken on a continuous leave basis, rather than intermittent, which can be as few as four hours of leave in non-consecutive time periods. (See Table 6)

**Table 6:**

<b>Type of NH PFML Claims Filed as of December 31, 2023</b>		
	<b>Continuous Leave</b>	<b>Intermittent Leave</b>
Group insurance for state employees	69	20
Employer sponsored group plan	233	96
Individual insurance	93	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>149</b>

Of the 544 claims filed, the majority were approved, while twenty-eight were canceled by the claimant, and twenty-one were denied due to various reasons which may have included a worker’s eligibility for benefits or lack of required claim documentation. One claim closed or ended because their NH PFML time was exhausted. Sixty-two claims were pending and eight were being processed at the time of this report. (See Table 7)

**Table 7:**

<b>NH PFML Claim Details as of December 31, 2023</b>					
<b>Category</b>	<b>Continuous</b>		<b>Intermittent</b>		<b>Grand Total</b>
	<b>PFL</b>	<b>PML</b>	<b>PFL</b>	<b>PML</b>	
Approved	255	66	91	12	424
Canceled	11	5	12	-	28
Denied	5	2	12	2	21
Exhausted (Closed/Ended)	1	-	-	-	1
Pending	34	8	17	3	62
New/Processing	6	2	-	-	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>544</b>

The most common reason for taking NH PFML leave in 2023 was for child bonding, followed by an employee’s own serious health condition and care of a family member. (See Table 8)

**Table 8:**

<b>NH PFML Claim Reasons as of December 31, 2023</b>					
	<b>Care of Family Member</b>	<b>Child Bonding</b>	<b>Pregnancy/ Maternity</b>	<b>Serious Health Condition (Employee)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Group insurance for state employees	31	58	-	-	89
Employer sponsored group plan	58	187	5	79	329
Individual insurance	10	100	1	15	126
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>544</b>



More leaves were taken by females than males, except for care of a family member amongst employer plans, which was slightly higher for males than females. (See Table 9)

**Table 9**

<b>NH PFML Claim Reasons by Gender as of December 31, 2023</b>				
	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Group insurance for state employees				
Care of Family Member	-	26	5	31
Child Bonding	-	45	13	58
Employer sponsored group plan				
Care of Family Member	3	24	31	58
Child Bonding	8	99	80	187
Pregnancy/Maternity	-	5	-	5
Serious Health Condition (Employee)	2	43	34	79
Individual insurance				
Care of Family Member	-	9	1	10
Child Bonding	-	75	25	100
Pregnancy/Maternity	-	1	-	1
Serious Health Condition (Employee)	-	15	-	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>544</b>

## Conclusion

The purchasing patterns and claims utilization seen in the first year of the NH PFML plan demonstrate the value of this program to NH workers who do not otherwise have coverage when they need to take leave to care for themselves or for a family member. As workplace flexibility continues to be an important factor to job seekers and a valuable recruitment and retention tool for employers, providing NH PFML as an employee benefit can make a real difference in remaining competitive in today's labor market.