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**OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE**

Office of Human Resources

**MEMORANDUM ON NEW PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE**

DATE: April 23, 2026

RE: New Paid Family Medical Leave and Changes to Family Medical Leave 12-Month Tracking Period

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Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to share an important update to the University System of Maryland's leave programs that will expand support for employees during significant life events.

Beginning July 1, 2026, USM will implement a new Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program. This benefit provides eligible employees with paid, job-protected leave for qualifying family, medical, and certain military-related reasons.

This program was established under Maryland law applicable to Executive Branch employees, including USM. It is important to note that this USM-administered PFML program is separate from the State's Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program, which is currently scheduled to take effect January 1, 2028. USM employees are not covered by the FAMLI insurance program, and PFML benefits will continue to be provided directly by USM.

**WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU**

PFML allows you to take time away from work while continuing to receive your regular pay and maintaining your benefits and job protection.

In most cases, employees may take:

- Up to 12 weeks of paid leave in a 12-month period

- Up to 24 weeks in limited circumstances

**PFML COVERS:**

- Bonding with a new child (birth, adoption, or placement)
- Your own serious health condition
- Caring for a family member with a serious health condition
- Certain military-related situations

**CHANGES TO EXISTING LEAVE POLICIES****PAID PARENTAL LEAVE**

- USM's current parental leave policies will be replaced by PFML.
- This includes:
  - Board of Regents Policy VII-7.49 – Policy on Parental Leave and Other Family Supports for Staff, and
  - Board of Regents Policy II-2.25 – Policy on Parental Leave for Faculty
- Leave for bonding with a new child will now be provided through the PFML program.

**CHANGES TO FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)**

- USM will move from a "look-back" method to a "look-forward" method for tracking FMLA leave.
- Going forward, your 12-month FMLA period will begin on the date you first use FMLA leave.
- All eligible employees will receive a new 12-week FMLA entitlement starting July 1, 2026, regardless of leave used prior to that date.

These updates are designed to better align federal FMLA with Maryland's PFML making it easier to coordinate your leave benefits.

**WHAT YOU SHOULD DO NEXT**

No immediate action is required.

**IF YOU ARE PLANNING FOR A QUALIFYING LEAVE ON OR AFTER JULY 1, 2026:**

- Please review the attached PFML Employee FAQs
- Contact your Human Resources office with any questions or for guidance on your specific situation

USM is committed to supporting our employees during important moments in their lives. We believe this new program provides meaningful flexibility and support for you and your families.

Sincerely,

**USM Office of Human Resources**

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