

Leave for Your Personal Well Being

Toolbox Series Video Transcript

So for those of you who are here in person, thank you so much for being here.

For those of you who are joining us online as well, thank you so much for being here this afternoon with us for our third Lunch and Learn series.

My name is Debbie Lammers. I'm the assistant vice chancellor of learning and development.

I have the great pleasure of helping to coordinate this through the executive vice chancellors office for these lunch and learn series.

So today, I have the distinct pleasure of introducing Adrienne Howarth-Moore to my left. She is the associate vice chancellor for human resources and the chief human resource officer here at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus.

She started with us in June of 2023 prior to joining

CU Anschutz she served her she served, most recently as the associate vice president and chief HR officer for the University of Texas at Austin.

Now, please don't hold that against her that she was in Texas.

Right. We're glad to have her here in Colorado with us. In that role, Adrienne oversaw oversight.

She oversaw 70 HR staff members and programs serving 2000 employees, including talent management, learning and development benefits, employee assistants and faculty and staff,

Occupational Health and Wellness program. What you might not know is her unique background in clinical, including nursing credentials, health and welfare benefit plan design, retirement programs, workers compensation, diversity, equity and inclusion, anti-discrimination practices, workplace safety, and threat assessment, expertise, labor, employment, and privacy laws.

She also holds a bachelor's degree in nursing from UT Austin, as well as an MBA from Texas Women's University.

She's also a licensed registered nurse, so if any of you feel feel ill today, please let us know she can help you today.

All right. So we do have, we do have a registered nurse in house.

I also have the pleasure of introducing Brad Mathers.

He's, to my right.

He is the director of employee relations and performance at CU Anschutz, and he's worked with the CU systems for over 13 years.

He's worked on three different campuses Denver, Anschutz, and he's also worked at Boulder. He specializes in employee relations, performance management, investigations, conflict resolution and training.

Brad has a master's degree in forensic psychology from the University of Denver and a bachelor's degree from CU Boulder. As an investigator.

Brad. Brad has conducted hundreds of investigations into fraud, workplace violence, substance abuse, and other forms of workplace misconduct.

And he also has a jury consultant and forensic, clinical or clinician prior to joining CU.

So they both come with a wealth of knowledge.

They're here today to talk about leave benefits for your personal well-being, which I know, you know, we all have, you know, a great interest in because a lot of this has changed over the years since we've been here.

So I am going to turn it over to both of them.

At the end, we will have a Q&A session, so that they can answer questions about anything they talk about today.

So, I'm going to turn it over to Adrian. Thank you so much for being with us.

Thank you Debbie. That was a mouthful right? Now I have to make one clarification because Debbie did make a slight error.

She said 2000 employees at UT, if you know anything about Texas, everything's bigger.

In Texas it was 20,000 employees at UT. However, I will say this.

There is something that is not bigger in Texas and that is heart and passion, and that is something that is unique to see you.

And so I am so excited to be here because the passion and the energy that is here on the medical campus was near and dear to my heart, and that is why I chose to join CU Anschutz.

And when I did join, one of the things that was very important to me in making my decision to come here was looking at our benefit package.

So, as Debbie shared, I'm a registered nurse by training, but I'm also an employee.

And as an employee, I'm an employee with multiple chronic medical health conditions.

So for me, especially, looking at our health benefit plans was a critical component of my decision to join.

And I was so impressed.

Our benefits package can rival anything that I have seen in both the private sector as well as the public sector.

So today we're going to talk about all of the leave benefits that are here for you.

To kind of wrap around yourself when you need leave for major life events.

So with that, I'm going to go ahead and Brad is going to join me in this.

We're going to go quickly. There is a lot to cover in a short period of time.

So one of the things I wanted to just share with you is we're going to cover today a variety of leaves that are really, really important, especially one of our newest ones, which is the family FMLI this is the one that you might be noticing a little bit of money coming out of your paycheck for.

So we're going to do a deeper dive into that one. And then for the rest, we're going to do much more of an overview.

But because our benefits are so robust, we have lots of other leaves that we're not even going to touch on today.

So if you came here hoping that one of these leaves would be discussed, I'm sorry to disappoint you.

But don't fret.

We will have another presentation coming up in the future where we will cover some of these additional leaves, but we will not be covering them today.

And then just as kind of a point of disclaimer, if you will, whenever we talk about leaf benefits, it's often that questions will surface.

And you might have a question that's very specific to you and your medical condition.

But for purposes of privacy, what we ask is that you not ask questions where you're sharing your personal health information or that of a coworker or colleague.

Ask them in more general ways. However, if you do have a question that's unique to you, we would be happy to answer it.

But we would like to do that with a private appointment.

So at the very end, we have our resources and you can definitely reach out to us and we can engage with you on your personal situation.

So with that, let's cover FAMLI, the brand new one.

So this is one that the voters of Colorado went ahead and enacted into law.

And then about mid-year last year is when you may have noticed a small amount of income coming out of your paycheck.

0.45%, to be exact. And then see you supplements with an additional 0.45%.

And then that creates a pool of dollars so that when our employees need to take time away from work to care for themselves or a qualified family member, that leave is now available to them with partial pay.

So what exactly does it cover in terms of employee eligibility?

It's very broad. Essentially, all employees are eligible.

Now the distinction here is employees. If you're not an employee with CU Anschutz, maybe you're a contractor, then as a contractor or as a non employee agent you would not be eligible.

However, you can purchase through the plan as an individual contractor.

You just wouldn't be receiving it from you. But if you are an employee, including a temporary employee, you are eligible for this new benefit.

And so the payments begin on day one of employment.

This to me is so critical because other leave types oftentimes have a wait period.

This is a benefit that begins from first day of employment.

And so it provides job protection after you've been employed for at least 180 days.

So how do you apply and what is it good for? It's just so many different things.

Happy things. Maybe you're expanding your family through an adoption or foster care placement, or maybe you're having a birth event,

but it's also there for you when you have some unplanned events that can be very difficult and challenging to manage.

And this benefit can help ensure that you have financial well-being while you're dealing with those issues.

So if you have a serious health condition of a qualified family member, a serious health condition of yourself, or if you need to make arrangements for a family member's military deployment, maybe you're the person that's designated to provide childcare for a family member that's in the military.

This leave is available for you. It also makes provisions for individuals that are experiencing domestic violence or stalking.

If you need to make safe arrangements to have alternate housing, this is another option that's now available to you.

So. Qualified family members. We know in today's world that families are different.

Families do not look maybe the same way that they did in the 1950s and 60s.

And so this new leave recognizes that. So in addition to the qualified family members that are outlined, it also has significant personal bond.

So what does that mean?

Well, we look at this holistically, and we think about individuals that are in your life that you have a significant personal bond, that if something should happen to them, there would be an expectation of you providing care.

Just a simple example of this might be a roommate.

So if your roommate is diagnosed with cancer and needs to have someone drive them to and from their radiation treatments every Friday, this benefit potentially is now available to you as their roommate to provide that care if they don't have another person that can assist them.

Ok? So it's a very expansive definition of family member.

So how do you apply? Well, CU has gone ahead and consolidated all of Leave management into one unit, the Leave management unit, through employee services at CU system.

So there's a lot of benefits to this. First of all, it's individuals that this is their specialty.

This is what they do all day every day. So they're going to be the most knowledgeable about the benefits that are available to you.

It also helps to protect your confidentiality, because it means that no one in your department will receive your medical certification information.

So that's another benefit of this unit. And they can go ahead and accept your application through an online portal.

And so if you go to your employee portal right now look for one of the titles.

And I've gone ahead and put an image of what that title looks like.

But this is where you can apply for the new family leave FMLA and paid parental leave, which we're going to touch on in a little bit through this portal. So what are the benefits that you might receive if you're approved for the new Family Leave program?

So again, it's a partial wage replacement.

So it won't replace your full salary, but it will replace a portion of it.

And this is under a state statutory calculation.

So the guidelines I've given an example here is if your weekly wage is \$500 a week, you're going to receive \$450 a week from the benefit.

So roughly 90% of your wages. So as you can see from this table, you'll notice something.

The lower your salary, the greater the percentage of the benefit.

The higher your salary, the less percent of benefit you receive.

And there is a weekly cap. That's a maximum amount.

And we're going to talk about how you can supplement using other paid leave options that you can add on top so that you can maintain full salary continuation while you recover if you are earning additional dollars, and therefore the benefit that you receive is a lower percentage of your income.

I don't know about you, but even though you may make a little bit more.

Most of us have car payments, mortgages, and our salary here at CU is not for fun.

Usually our salary is because we need it. And so even if your salary percentage is lower, you likely will want to supplement with some of your other paid leave options so that you can keep your salary as high as is needed for your essential bills.

So how does family work with our other leave options.

And so when you initiate a new family application the benefit again that I mentioned of CU system Leave management unit receiving it is that you will be assigned a Leave coordinator.

And that Leave coordinator will work with you to create a leave plan.

They will talk with you about your needs.

Are you wanting to maximize the amount of time off that you need, or are you wanting to maximize the amount of money replacement income that you need?

And those may be different for different employees. And so they will help you navigate all of your leave options, not just the family benefit.

They'll look at the totality of what you have available, and then help you craft a leave strategy that will work best for your circumstance.

And part of that is that we will coordinate with you the other leaves that are available.

So FMLA, the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act is an unpaid leave.

We have an image of an umbrella here because really it's an umbrella coverage that gives you federal job protection.

And it also helps to ensure that federally, your benefits are protected while you're on leave.

So sometimes employees say, why do I even want FMLA on file if I already have family and if I'm already using vacation time or sick time?

And what I always recommend and suggest to employees is think about this is the federal job protections that you want to have in place so that while you're recovering, you can be assured that when you're ready to return to work, that your job is secure and that you're going to be returned to the same or an equivalent position.

So that's why FMLA is important, even though it doesn't provide you money.

It does provide you job protections. And again, when you apply for family, we're going to run FMLA concurrently with family all at the same time so that hopefully you don't have to take additional steps.

Paid parental leave. So this is another amazing benefit that CU Anschutz provides.

And we've made some changes as a result of family coming on board and now being available.

We have enhanced our paid parental leave, effective this January 1st.

So because we now have an additional pool of money with family, it meant that we could expand our paid parental leave benefit.

So instead of four weeks, we're able to provide six weeks of paid parental leave.

So through a combination of your family benefit and the paid parental leave benefit, if you are expanding your family through birth, adoption or foster care placement, you can now receive up to six weeks of full wages.

Then, after the six weeks using your family benefit, you can receive an additional six weeks of family coverage.

And you can choose to supplement with your vacation or sick time to receive an additional amount close to or exactly matching your current weekly wage.

But again, your choice to use vacation or sick is just that.

It's a choice.

You could choose to just use the family benefit on its own and preserve your vacation and sick time for uses for uses later in the year.

So that's a choice that you would get to make. In addition, you can have up to six months of unpaid time so that you can just work and navigate and get accustomed to having that new individual in your family.

And then last but not least, CU Anschutz just at January 1st made the decision to no longer have a one year wait period for paid parental leave.

So now, beginning day one of employment, parental leave is available.

Should you choose to expand your family even in your first year of employment.

So just kind of for illustrative purposes, if you have family in place, we're going to run it concurrently with PPL.

We're going to combine the benefits together to maximize the amount of salary continuation that you receive.

With other Leave programs. If you're taking family because you broke your knee.

If you're taking family because your mom maybe needs assistance kind of finding and locating an assisted care facility, maybe her dementia is starting to deteriorate, and you need to take time off in order to facilitate that. FMLI is there for you.

You would supplement FMLI with your vacation or sick time to go ahead and provide you full salary continuation during that time.

So again, any of the other reasons that FMLI is eligible for you can supplement with your other paid leave options.

Short term disability is a voluntary program that you can elect when you're hired or during annual enrollment.

So again, short term disability is only available for yourself, not for a family member.

But if you do have a medical condition of yourself, we will go ahead and run short term disability to maximize that benefit, FMLI to maximize that benefit, and then any of your other paid leaves again, to try to get you as close to 100% salary as possible when you're out recovering.

So with that, I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Brad. He's going to cover some of these other leave options.

And I know that there might be questions. So if you can just hold those until the end.

And then we'll make sure and get all those questions. So Brad. Yes.

Good afternoon everyone.

So, thank you, Adrian, for taking us through, FMLI.

I'm going to kind of run you through the other types of leave that are afforded through the university, either for yourself or employees that that you may be advising or looking at.

So CU is very generous obviously in providing leave.

We'll look at accruals in a moment, but sick leave is one of those sort of buckets of leave that is as provided.

And here are the requisite policies as they apply to our different classifications of employees.

Staff and faculty are guided by APS 5062, which was just revised in the fall.

So if you haven't picked up that policy lately do that because some of the provisions were expanded, classified staff, as with all the other sort of provisions of their employment, are governed by the state classified personnel board rules.

So generally speaking, you know, sick leave is applicable for any sort of situation where there is a medical basis for the leave.

Could be, you know, an employee has a cold or a flu or they have COVID.

It could be for caring for eligible family members that also have a sort of a medical basis for leave.

It could be for an extended leave as well.

When does sick leave start to become something else?

Well, when the Leave becomes extended and the cut off for that, it's worded a little bit differently depending on the classification.

I like to think of it this way. When we're talking about more than three consecutive working days, or into the fourth consecutive working.

In other words, Brad is sick on Monday. Brad is just a brat, is sick on Wednesday, and he's not at work at 8 a.m. on Thursday because he's still sick.

Then we are. We are prompting departments to then sort of start the FML process or getting employees to the FML process.

However, if you have concerns about leave abuse and we're kind of talking about performance a little bit.

So if you're looking at a situation like that, please make sure you're talking to your employee relations and performance consultant.

But if you suspect leave abuse, okay.

The employee as historically has had a pattern of calling out on Mondays or on Fridays cocktail flu or or whatnot.

You can request a doctor's note after one instance if you suspect leave abuse, so will want you to coordinate with the employee relations team performance when you do that, because we're probably talking about a broader situation. Okay.

Question for the audience. Your employee says, hey, this this week has been, it's been a ton of work.

We got through it. But, you know, I'm really sort of burned out.

I need to recharge. So I'm going to take Friday off as a mental health day.

Okay. Is that sick leave or is it vacation leaves?

Oh, wow. We've got a kind of a 5050 split on this.

Okay. A quote unquote mental health day to recharge because we're sort of burned out, or we need a break from the work.

Okay. That is considered vacation leave. Because if there's not a medical basis for the leave person, just need some time off.

Okay, so, if it's more complicated than that, please kind of contact us and we'll we'll put the situation under a magnifying glass and kind of help you out.

But generally speaking, mental health days are considered vacation lanes.

Okay, so I mentioned before, when the sick leave becomes a bit extended, we start to think of it in terms of potentially family medical leave or even family leave.

And as Adrian mentioned, the system office is handling the processing of these applications.

Their employees are going to apply through the employee portal,

and the system office is handling the processing of the documentation and the leave.

But we are still sort of partnering with them and running parallel advising the campus.

And we still have people on employee relations performance who are dedicated to these programs, who can

guide you through the situation that you're looking at or just kind of help, especially if it's more complicated situation.

The most complicated situations that you'll come across are when there's an extended medical leave.

And concurrent to that, there are performance issues with that employee, and we want you to get us involved as early as possible,

those situations, because we don't want you pulling your hair out and how complicated those are and potentially how frustrating those are.

True to my word. I told you I'd show the accruals

for second vacation. They do differ by employer classification.

And as I mentioned before, CU gives a ton of leave.

I'm just kind of curious.

Has anyone been out of previous organization, institution, place of employment that offers more leave than university staff receives?

Anyone? Anyone. Anyone. Zero. Oh one.

Equal. Private company in Boulder is the one.

No limitations to the leave. Okay, so that's the only place that has a speed is where they basically said take leave whenever you need it.

So we give a ton of leave. That does differ by classification.

, as I mentioned. Yeah. We also have a live sharing program on this campus.

It's, um, not very frequently utilized.

It's not very popular because, frankly, the policy is rather restrictive and can be frustrating to people who are in these situations and potentially

are thinking about needing to access leave other than that which they have accrued for themselves.

So I've put up sort of the policy language, um, here, like I said, it's there's a very high bar to to meet this criteria,

but the qualifying events must be something that either poses a direct threat to life or is sort of a quote unquote, catastrophic event.

Okay. The employee in question must have exhausted all of their leave, and the application must be received within 30 days of the event.

Okay, so if you're aware of one of these potential sort of situations,

work with us early so we can potentially, you know, beat the clock that's running once.

Once the event happens, the catastrophic event or the life, threatening event happens.

That employee, whether they know it or not, they're sort of on the clock to potentially take advantage of this program.

We also offer bereavement leave. So in the event of, um.

qualifying situation, an employee can request up to five days or up to 40 hours of bereavement leave.

Subject to supervisor approval. But we we generally recommend that supervisors approve those requests as they come through.

Unless it's, somehow unreasonable. The sick leave policy that I mentioned earlier for staff and faculty.

562 was changed in the fall to include potentially providing sick leave for bereavement leave type purposes.

But we want you, as administrators and supervisors and departments to provide this leave first.

And if the employee has additional requests for leave beyond the 40 hours that were then, um, utilizing their sick leave under 562 for that.

Okay. But that is not a perpetual leave sort of situation.

Okay. Um, we don't want you to be in a situation where an employee takes 40 hours of bereavement leave,

and then there are using sick leave for weeks or months beyond that, for a bereavement leave sort of purpose.

We we want to sort of talk through that situation with you and we can potentially take measures to

curb that leave,

or at least gather more information or set expectations for how long an employee can be utilizing securely for operational purposes.

And being in Colorado, we occasionally get a lot of snow or other sorts of weather events that may cause the campus to, to, new to, to close.

Um, most commonly snow. But this policy has been enacted for tornadoes before um or even for ice.

So um, but typically it's snow. And what will generally happen is a chancellor will make a decision either the evening before, um,

especially if, you know, weather forecasts or pretending doom, um, or, or prior to 5:00 in the morning.

Um, if you are not. So sign up for those alerts.

Please make sure you do, because you'll get a text message, before you wake up saying campus is closed, don't come to work.

And it's like the best text message you could ever get. Um, however, unless you are an essential employee.

Okay. and I mean capital E essential employees.

I know everyone in this room is very important and vital to units.

Some employees are capital E essential employees, which means they need to report to campus

as directed.

And that may mean, even if everyone else is affected to inclement weather, they need to report to campus for their essential duties.

Now, you can probably thank the pandemic for this, but, um, in many circumstances, as we did just a week or two ago,

we had a we had a late start at 10 a.m., so we were technically inclement weather policy the first two hours in the day.

And employees were encouraged to sort of stay home and work from home where applicable.

So, even in the event that this policy comes into effect, employees may be guided to work from home where applicable or where reasonable.

Okay. And lastly, holiday leave.

The state of Colorado provides nine holidays for full time employees, but we as a university were accustomed to having about 12 a year.

When you add in the, personal observance day and the the administrative leave that occurs around,

Christmas and New Year's, you can expect to get 12 a year.

The personal observance day by default is Juneteenth.

Okay. But that is to be otherwise thought of as sort of a floating holiday for any employee to take throughout the year.

And it's sort of tracked on a fiscal year basis.

So, if, you sort of want to keep an eye on, as, as, as units,

as supervisors and as departments to make sure that employees aren't forfeiting this by not utilizing it.

And then they realize on July 2nd or something of the new fiscal year,

that they forgot to take it the year before, they would forfeit it in that case.

So, think about it sort of proactively.

Okay. And who we want to be.

Your your, partner and your your, resource and your consultants for any of these, leave issues and any of these leave questions.

So I put the, the central system contact information up there because they they are handling your employees leave applications.

They are looking at medical documentation and making determinations about eligibility and then communicating that to employees and to supervisors.

Otherwise, you know, we want to be your partners for for these, issues and for these concerns because,

like I said, oftentimes they are complicated by performance issues.

They are complicated by potentially sort of reorganization issues or layoff issues, etc., etc.

So, keep us in your at the front of your contact list and

that email address erp at communications dot CU is the best way to get a hold of us.

And with that, I think we're into our Q&A session. Yeah.

And before we start, our Q&A I thought what would be just helpful is for me just to share one example of a

complicated leave kind of showing you how some of the leaves might overlap to maximize benefit.

And then we can dive into the questions. So the scenario that I'm going to share with you is one that we definitely see happen.

I think for many of us, we might be in the generational

place in our life where we might still have minors in our household that we're still caring for.

Maybe they're teenagers, but we're also starting to care for parents.

And so as an employee, I'm just going to use myself as an example.

So I have a mom, and my mom has been diagnosed now in a terminal state of her

the last stages of her life. And so I'm needing to prepare her for hospice.

And so as an employee of CU, I'm, you know, doing my job.

I work remote when I need to work remote. I'm coming into campus when I need to come into campus.

But now that I need to actually make arrangements for hospice care, let's just say, for example, my mom is out of state.

I'm going to go ahead and take advantage of my leave options.

So I'm going to go to the leave portal and I'm going to apply for the new family benefit.

So I have vacation time and I have sick time, but I also have minor children.

They may get sick later in the fall. So I might not want to exhaust all of my accruals while I'm assisting my mom.

So I'm going to go ahead. Apply for family. In that discussion, we have a good conversation with the leave coordinator.

I fill in the documentation and the paperwork that's required and I get approved for family.

Simultaneously, I'm also going to be approved for FMLA to give me job protections while I go

ahead and leave the state and help my mom and get hospice situation set up.

So we're using that time. I'm going to supplement with some of my sick time accrual so that I can earn

additional income to keep me whole so that I can pay my mortgage and pay my car bill.

And then unfortunately, it comes to pass that my mom passes away, my leave for FAMILI

now ends my leave for FMLA now ends.

But now I can leverage bereavement leave. I can take an additional five days to make arrangements for funerals and or to attend the funeral.

Any of you who have had a significant member of your family passed away know that five days is not necessarily sufficient to do all those things,

but it's an additional five days that I've received. Because then after that,

I can choose to take additional vacation time so that I can go ahead and get the estate prepared and the house ready for sale.

So that's just one example of a situation that we have employees experience where

they're kind of trying to balance those financial well-being needs that they have,

as well as care for their family members in a compassionate way.

Take the time that they need to be away from work and have some assurance that their job is being protected,

both federally and by the state, so that when they're ready to come back, their job is there for them.

So hopefully that example just gave you kind of an idea of how those overlapping benefits can support you.

And with that we'll go ahead and take questions. And we have our colleagues from Learning and Development.

They have some microphones. So they're going to go around the room and look for that.

And I believe we also have someone online checking for questions. And so they can prompt us with those as well.

For those of you online, we have questions in the audience. Oops, I'm not using my mic.

Can you just speak to. I think we're in a unique window with FAMLI just starting, the benefits.

employees may have tapped into last year, but have the opportunity to sort of do, again,

paid parental leave, or, I guess not the paid part, but the parental leave may fall under that.

Can you speak to that a little bit? Yeah. So we'll just use the example of.

So when the new FMLI program started January 1st, the FMLA clock also restarted January 1st.

So if an individual had towards the end of the year leveraged existing leave options,

maybe in October, November, December, come January 1st, they got a fresh start.

And so they were able to go ahead and get a fresh 12 weeks of FMLA, in addition to the 12 weeks of family that was available.

That's kind of a one year transition opportunity.

So that won't happen all the time because it is.

Normally it would be you utilize the benefit and you get to maximize that benefit in a 12 month cycle.

But because this was our first year, we had to go ahead and kind of do a restart.

Did you want to add anything, Brad?

Other than, I would only just add if I would just add that some of those situations can get very frustrating because you feel like employees may,

there may be a worst case scenario where an employee is intentionally trying to take as much leave as possible, and so all those little pieces,

how they fit together, we'd be happy to just kind of look at your specific case and just, you know, sort of try to predict how it may play out.

But, yeah. To Adrian's point, 2024 is going to be a wild year for leave.

Yeah. Hi. I have three, if you don't mind, around bereavement leave.

And, one. Is there, an amount, a maximum that you can take in one given year for bereavement and then two,

what is C policy C, u and its policy on requiring documentation?

like a doctor's note for example, for sick leave and then three.

I'm going to sound morbid, but, the 40 hours is a person who passed away.

So, for example, if you had a system where multiple family members of May passed away, is it still 40 hours?

Is it 40 hours per person? So I'll take the first part, and then I'm going to have Brad take on the documentation requirement element of the question.

So the first part is it is it is bereavement leave kind of cumulative for the year or is it for each individual death event.

It is for each individual death event there is not a maximum per year.

So, it's tragic is that maybe we do have employees that have more than one significant family member pass in the same year,

so they would be eligible to utilize the bereavement leave benefit for a parent.

And then if something should happen to their spouse, they would be eligible.

And if later something were to happen to, a grandparent or a child, they would also be eligible in the same year.

In terms of documentation, I'm going to put that over to Brad, please.

Sure. I think this is working now. yeah. I'll just I'll provide an example to the first part.

you know, during the pandemic there there was, it was very difficult to have memorial service or funeral, etc.

So a lot of those sort of were delayed for a year or two.

And then and then maybe another death occurred in real time, while the delayed memorial was going on.

So we did have some, request where there are two bereavement leave, requests almost on top of each other.

so each unit, in terms of documentation, each unit can determine what the what is required for a bereavement leave request.

If you haven't had that discussion as a unit or as a as a leadership group, it probably means that you don't have sort of a unit policy around it.

And the default is that you are not asking for documentation.

Okay. What and what sort of documentation are you talking about, Brad?

Well, it would be something like, a pamphlet from the memorial service or a, copy of the plane ticket,

to go from A to B to go to the memorial service or an obituary or something of that nature.

So if you're going to enact a policy as a unit to verify this bereavement leave request, you're going to be sort of asking for things like that.

Now, we have had situations where, where there was bereavement leave request abuse.

Okay. I think the record is five, but I can recall one unit where an employee made five such requests in the scope of about a year,

and that prompted the unit to come up with a policy. And then they applied that policy.

It has to be uniform, but, policy to sort of try and curb that.

And there was an answer your question completely or.

40 hours for a death event.

Yeah. So in other words, so let's just use the example of a catastrophic car accident.

And in the car accident, both your children and your spouse is killed.

It's five days of bereavement per individual. Okay, because each has their own service, each has their own, impact that's associated with that.

so for, short term disability,

do you still have to exhaust all of your sick and vacation leave before you can use that when you're looking at supplementing?

That's a good question.

You may have stumped me. I mean, like, that's a good question. I know the question.

I've thought about it, but my answer. Brad, do you have that answer?

The question is, do you have to exhaust your sick and vacation in order to use short term disability?

That's true. Yeah. Yes, that that still is there.

The question about the FMLI. I know FMLI can run concurrently with STD.

It's that's where I think our leave specialists might be good. Unless, you know, Brad, because the.

the, we cannot require that the STD company changed their policy.

They require that you exhaust vacation and sick. FMLI benefit,

the option for the employee is there to use second vacation.

So if you want to use both,

I'm making an assumption you would have to exhaust sick and vacation to leverage STD and then take your STD on top of your family.

But I would have to defer to our leave management unit just because some of that nuances knew.

Unless you know Brad. I believe that vacation is optional for the employee to freeze or not.

but what I'd like to do is talk to you after our, our presentation kind of drill on that a little bit more.

Yeah, which is great. I love the stump the presenter questions.

Okay. Hear me? There we go. so I have two questions.

The first one is about short term disability with short term disability.

In the past, the employee had to work directly with the standard for the insurance coverage.

Is that going to change now that we have the leave coordinators?

Will they be available to help the employee navigate the short term disability process?

So, no. So the employee will still work directly with the short term disability vendor and provider to initiate that claim,

because that was voluntary coverage that they elected.

However, the leave coordinators, by being part of Employee services, which is the unit that administers the benefits for CU and also you campuses,

those lead coordinators are very knowledgeable about the disability plan and can definitely help coach and guide.

They just won't be able to intervene and actually apply for or initiate a claim, but they can coach the employee on the best way to leverage that benefit.

Okay. Okay. I'm sorry. I have one more. On the time tracking piece.

Is that something that the leave coordinator is going to be entering?

Because the amount of family depends on their income, and it's a different ratio per person.

Is that something that the department's going to have to work with the employee on to make sure that all of their time is recorded correctly?

I can't answer 100% of your question right now, because the the CU times the rows in HCM about returning from leave,

putting on leave, etc. is a bit of a gray area right now.

Ultimately, the system office leave team will be approving all of those leave transactions.

Right now we're in a gray area where they can't and we're doing it for them.

Um. And your second question was about just submitting time, the employee submitting time.

That's still a departmental. Um. and I would say supervisory sort of function is to make sure each employee is,

is putting their live their leave in correctly each month because the supervisor is certifying their timesheet each month.

And, that should reflect the amount of leave that the employee is taking.

And I'll just share that, a nice feature that's coming.

Coming soon, but not yet live to kind of supplement onto to the answer to that when when Brad says we're still in the gray area.

CU system has purchased a new software tool called Absent Soft that will track all of these available leave types,

and it will be an interactive portal that supervisors can go into, employees can go into, as well as certain HR designated contacts.

None of the confidential medical information is visible.

However, the dates of approval are. So it will allow supervisors and employees to look at their time in a portal and enter

time so that FMLA and other elements of leave can be tracked in one consistent place,

so that it will hopefully be easier for the employee, easier for supervisors, and easier for designated HR contacts.

We don't know the live date yet. They're working on that.

and so we're hoping that that will come sometime in the summer of this year is what, you know,

we've been, told from CU system, but it's definitely tentative because they are working through that.

I will share that the state, is also working on a portal for employers that are not doing this on their own like we are,

and the state portal will not be available until the end of this year.

So we're hoping to beat the state. We're hoping that CU that our system will be up and running by July timeframe.

June, July. but the state has said for employees that work at other employers, they're looking at an October November timeline.

Well, the mike is helpful though, because for our online viewers to hear the question.

Just about bereavement leave again. Is it,

if you need to be gone for like two hours in a day, you just take two hours of bereavement.

Or is that entire day considered one of your five days?

So as opposed to five days?

It usually works out to five days. Employees usually request the max, but if they were to request something less than that, then think of an hourly.

It puts you down here. Yeah.

This first question is easy. Could you navigate back to the first slide with the QR code?

Yes. Oh, I don't have there. We are working towards the QR code.

There we go. Okay. we do have a couple of questions here.

The first one is, what if an employee doesn't want to apply for FMLA or FAMILI and they ask, can't you just track and enter by yourself?

Probably asking the supervisor. So the question meaning if I don't want to take advantage of the FAMILI benefit and I would prefer not to have FMLA.

So remember when I mentioned about job protections.

So both FAMILI and FMLA provide the state as well as federal job protections.

So, not leveraging those opportunities means that an employee may be subject to performance implications associated with time away from work.

and so that that's an element to consider in making those decisions.

And then from the department perspective, there is a again, a performative evaluation process because generally speaking,

attendance is always considered an essential function of the job.

And so when you're not using a protected leave, then the department can maybe approve or deny leave.

And so that's another reason why exercising your leverage, leveraging your opportunities make may come about.

but but again, there may be very good reasons why an employee who has adequate accruals,

they have plenty of vacation and plenty of sick, that they can request.

Their department approves their vacation. They choose not to use FMLI because maybe they want to use FMLI for a different area of their life.

Maybe in the fall, you know, this is in the spring they want to use I want to use vacation right now, and I want to save my FMLI for the fall.

And so that's definitely an opportunity. You just need to make sure that if you're requesting that time that your department can accommodate you,

and if they cannot accommodate you, then that's where you may be prompted to go ahead and apply for FMLI.

But, Brad. Go ahead. Yeah, I'll just tack on to that a little bit.

So technically an employee can refuse to take FML or FMLI, even though if it's a it's we all sort of know it's qualifying situation.

we you can't lead a horse to water. Water necessarily.

if an employee is incapacitated or otherwise unable to complete the application and they want to,

business partners, and or others can submit applications on the employer's behalf.

But, if it's if it's an otherwise sort of voluntary situation, the employee could technically refuse.

And the risk that they run, in addition to losing the job protections, is that the leave that they're using.

So if they're not going providing the medical documentation,

then they're there may not be a definitive medical basis to take the leave and not leave may be vacation leave and,

not not to mention all the other sort of protections and provisions that they would be giving up.

The next one would be if short term disability is 60% and FMLI based on weekly wage is 68%,

can STD still pay to help bring up to 100%?

Yeah, the two could combine to create 100. However, the state statutory criteria for family is that it cannot exceed.

And so you cannot have the two overlapping benefits and receive 110% pay or 120% pay.

You can go up to the maximum of 100% of your salary.

The next one is, you mentioned that, FMLA and FAMILI applies to care for sick family members.

Example parents who live outside of state. What about if they live overseas?

Does this need, special clearance? Yeah.

So, parents living overseas again, we have

dynamic way that families are now organized and international, living arrangements are more common.

And so, yes, if a family member is out of the country, you can still exercise your benefit opportunities.

Um, if they're living out of the country, sometimes there are some provisions that we'll need to make in terms of documentation requirements.

Um, because again, if the medical provider is out of country and, um, the documentation is in an alternate language, we'll need to work through that.

But it is still an opportunity for employees to take advantage of their leave options.

So it's fair to say that lead should always start with your department and your supervisor, right?

Because you have to go through them for the reasons that you've mentioned that it's a partnership

with employee services in the lead coordinators there to explore your options more fully.

But you always want to at least start with your supervisor as well.

And what they do in employee services is more the I don't want to call it exceptional, Lee, but it's more the complicated lead.

Yeah, it's not your I'm out sick today or I'm going to take vacation. I to do this.

Yes, it's the FMLI, it's the FMLA. It's those kinds of things.

It's the parental leave. But you should always start with your supervisor in your department first.

So for clarity. So if you're, you know, if you're just needing to take a, you know, you're, you're, you're you wake up and you're sick and well,

you, you call your supervisor and let them know that you're not going to be in that day.

That's going to be your normal, you know, run of the mill types of requests.

If you're going to be planning an extended leave, you know,

that you're going to maybe have an elective surgery, or maybe you're going to be expanding your family.

You want to work with your department so that they can plan for business continuity while you're going to be away.

And so, absolutely, you want to engage with your department first so that you can work that out.

What you do not need to do is disclose to your department the medical nature for the reason for your leave.

You may feel comfortable sharing that. You may have a relationship with your supervisor that that just feels comfortable for you.

But we're just saying as a best practice, we would encourage you not to disclose confidential medical information.

And we also just want to let you know that your department is not, should not required you to disclose your confidential medical information,

but for business continuity reasons and for making scheduling arrangements, looking about who's going to cover your work while you're gone.

Absolutely. Your department is critical in that leave management process.

I'll just tack on to that for a moment. I'm just curious. raise your hand if you are a supervisor.

Okay. So when it comes when you're the supervisor and your employee is requesting leave from you.

We want you to try to avoid, as much as possible learning what the underlying medical condition is behind the leaves.

If your employee is trying to hand you medical documentation, treat it like it's radioactive.

We want you to be out of the loop of the know of what the medical condition is.

The people who need to know what the medical condition is, know what it is. You as the supervisor.

Your first, charge is to manage that employee, and, um, you know, give them their duties and, etc. and expectations.

The reason behind that is, unfortunately, we get some situations where an employee will make a claim about FMLA retaliation,

and it's hard for that claim to hold water if you,

the supervisor, don't know what the underlying medical condition is, to then claim that you retaliated against them for said medical condition.

So we want you to be out of the know on what the condition is, and it's designed to protect you as an employee.

It's also designed to protect you as an institution and the supervisors and managers that are doing their work.

So it's really designed to protect everyone that medical information stay private and only the units that have need to know.

But that it actually is another great prompt that, for that question.

What we didn't discuss in this presentation just for timely reasons is return to work and the ADA process.

So, departments, that's another critical time when a department is essential in working through

what might be a reasonable accommodation for a medical condition of yourself.

And so we can maybe save that for a future toolbox series.

but that is where a supervisor may have a need to know about more information in

order to determine if a reasonable accommodation is available in the department.

And again, we would work closely with the department, the Ada coordinator and the employee to work that through.

Thanks. Um, just a quick clarification on the family leave.

Um, I think your slides said 12 weeks in the 12 month period when, um, how do you is that the fiscal year?

The calendar year? Calendar year? Um, I will say that that makes it challenging.

We would have preferred the scope. But the state of Colorado chose the calendar for us.

So it is a calendar year basis, which is why everything reset, including our federal FMLA clock January 1st.

All right, well, I think we're at time, but if there's any other questions that come in, please.

Brad, put up the very last slide, and you all can receive this slide presentation, the employee relations and performance, unit, email.

So feel free to send your questions there. We're happy to get back with you, especially if it's a question very specific to your case.

And we'll make sure to take that time to meet with you and discuss your issues.

All right, you guys have a great afternoon. Make sure grab some sandwiches and some chips on your way out.

And we appreciate you. Thank you.