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Employee paid sick leave coverage in Canada, 1995 to 2022

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Abstract

Until recently, lack of data on paid sick leave (PSL) hindered analyses of whether employee PSL coverage had improved or worsened in Canada over the last few decades, an important limitation highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This study fills this information gap. Using the 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements and the Labour Force Survey from 2020 to 2022, this study documents the evolution of employee PSL coverage in Canada from 1995 to 2022. The study shows that self-reported PSL coverage increased moderately from 1995 to 2022. In many cases, coverage appears to have risen faster in jobs that traditionally exhibit relatively low coverage than in other jobs. Nevertheless, large differences in self-reported coverage remained in 2022 across several dimensions such as education, industry, firm size and deciles of the wage distribution. The study also shows that for many front-line workers—such as those employed in grocery stores, gasoline stations, child day-care services, and nursing and residential care facilities—PSL coverage still appears to be far from universal.

Keywords: sick leave, job quality, non-wage benefits

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Introduction

A constant refrain during the COVID-19 pandemic has been to “stay at home when you’re sick” (Public Health Agency of Canada 2023). In contrast, in a 2021 survey conducted by the Environics Institute for Survey Research, 51% of respondents not working from home before the pandemic said they “would likely have gone into work anyway” if they woke up sick before the pandemic (Environics Institute 2021).¹ Working while ill not only hampers an employee’s own well-being but can also harm other employees in the case of contagious illnesses. Yet sick employees may feel pressure to attend work despite feeling ill—commonly known as presenteeism (Aronsson, Gustafsson and Dallner 2000; Skagen and Collins 2016). Presenteeism and lower compliance with health regulations are partly attributable to financial pressures tied to the lack of compensation for time away from work (Heymann and Daku 2014; Bodas and Peleg 2020; OECD 2020).

Paid sick leave (PSL) exists as an income support to address the issue of individuals having to choose between their health, and that of their coworkers, and forgoing earnings. In addition to research showing that PSL provides valuable income support (OECD 2020) and job stability (Hill 2013), PSL is known to reduce contagious presenteeism. The health benefits of PSL include reduced influenza-like illnesses (Pichler and Ziebarth 2017; Stearns and White 2018; Pichler, Wen and Ziebarth 2021), mortality (Kim 2017) and other afflictions (Song et al. 2023) and increased self-rated health (Earle and Heymann 2011).

The recent COVID-19 pandemic led to renewed scrutiny of PSL made available to Canadian employees. Concerns for front-line workers falling ill were deemed of paramount importance (Kerman et al. 2021; Thompson et al. 2021). Mandatory quarantines and self-isolation requirements because of COVID-19 led the Government of Canada to implement temporary sickness supports, such as the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit, among other longer-term employment supports.² Evidence from temporary PSL in the United States suggests it was associated with a 50% reduction in COVID-19 cases per state per day (Thompson et al. 2021). No comparable evidence is available in Canada.

Among 22 countries ranking highly in terms of economic and human development, Canada was one of 3 countries with no national PSL for employees who missed five days of work because of sickness (Heymann et al. 2010). In Canada, beyond temporary COVID-19-related programs, Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits provide PSL of 55% of earnings (up to \$650 per week) for longer illness periods of up to 26 weeks.³ Besides the eligibility requirement of 600 hours or more of insurable employment, there is an unpaid one-week waiting period.⁴ This waiting period implies that EI sickness benefits only cover illnesses exceeding this one-week period. While the federal government amended the *Canada Labour Code* to provide up to 10 days of PSL effective December 2022, this only extends to federally regulated industries.

For the vast majority of Canadians not working in federally regulated industries, short-term sick leave regulation is under provincial jurisdiction. But studying PSL across Canada can be complex because of a “patchwork” of differences across provinces (Heymann and Daku 2014; Sim 2021; Smith 2022). From 1995 to 2022, only Prince Edward Island (one day in 2010), Quebec (two days in 2019) and British Columbia (five days in 2022) mandated that short-term PSL be provided by employers to eligible

1. Results are based on a non-probabilistic sample of nearly 6,000 Canadians aged 18 and older conducted in June 2021 by the Environics Institute for Survey Research in partnership with the Future Skills Centre and the Diversity Institute at Toronto Metropolitan University.

2. For more information, see Government of Canada (2022).

3. Fifteen weeks before December 18, 2022.

4. Before January 1, 2017, the waiting period was two weeks. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this requirement was waived for claimants who were quarantined.

employees. Except for temporary COVID-19-specific paid leave in certain provinces, only these three provinces have mandated permanent PSL.

Barring mandated minimums in these three provinces, employers in Canada determine whether their employees have access to PSL for short-term illnesses. Until recently, information on the degree to which Canadian employers offered such access was scarce. From March 2020 to December 2022, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) filled this information gap by asking respondents whether they had access to PSL with their job. Along with comparable data from Statistics Canada's 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements (SWA), this new information allows one to document the evolution of employee PSL coverage from 1995 to 2022. This is the goal of this study.

In addition to studying the evolution of PSL coverage from 1995 to 2022, the study shows how PSL coverage varies across demographic and job characteristics. By doing so, the study informs discussions about the working conditions of various groups of Canadian workers.

The paper is organized as follows: the next section discusses the data sources, the third section analyzes the evolution of PSL coverage from 1995 to 2022, the fourth section focuses on employee coverage in 2022 and the fifth section briefly analyzes the implementation of recent legislation in British Columbia. This is followed by concluding remarks.

Data and samples

The LFS is used to study PSL coverage for employees aged 15 and older in Canada. Effective March 22, 2020, the LFS asked respondents: "Which of the following employment benefits do you have access to as part of your job?" One option is "Paid sick leave." LFS data collected from this date onwards can be used to study PSL prevalence.

The 1995 SWA can also be used to study PSL coverage since it asked the following question: "Through your employer, are you entitled to paid sick leave?" The 1995 SWA, administered in November 1995, is based on a subsample of the LFS and is therefore fairly comparable to the LFS.

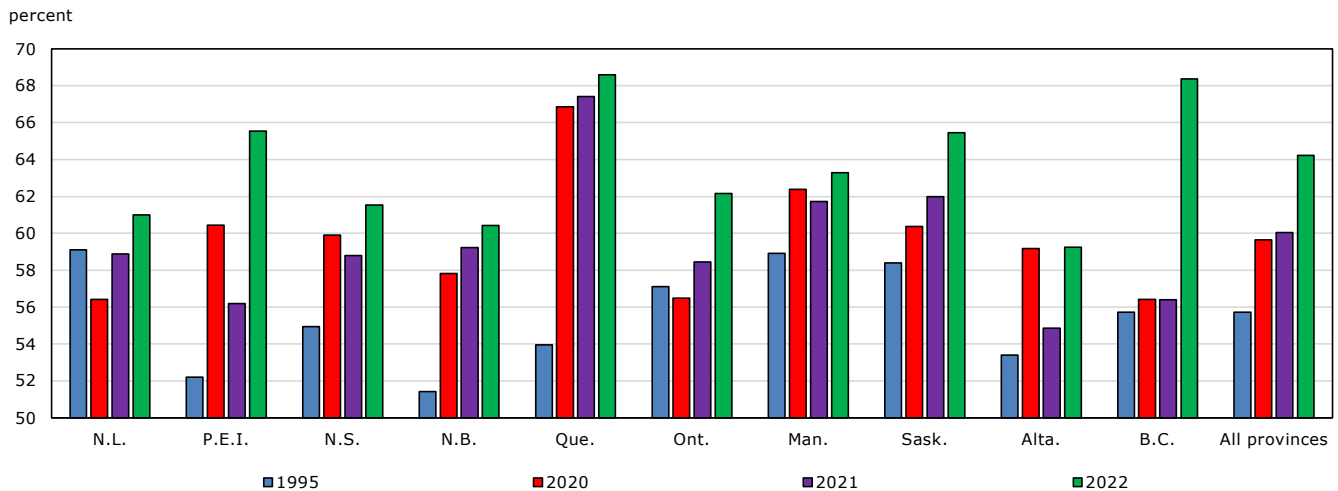
The final sample considered in this study analyzes self-reported accounts of employer-provided PSL coverage in the main job—the job with the greatest number of weekly work hours—held by employees aged 15 to 64. Because individuals residing in the territories are excluded from the SWA, attention is restricted to employees living in the 10 Canadian provinces. Given that the 1995 SWA was administered in November, LFS results from November 2020, 2021 and 2022 are used when making comparisons across years.⁵ Whenever variables of interest are unavailable through the SWA, LFS results for all 12 months of 2022 are used.

5. The resulting samples include 21,174 observations in November 1995, 38,808 observations in November 2020, 42,669 observations in November 2021 and 52,904 observations in November 2022.

Self-reported paid sick leave coverage, 1995 to 2022

Overall, self-reported PSL coverage increased by eight percentage points from 1995 to 2022. Approximately 64% of Canadian employees reported having PSL in November 2022, compared with about 56% in November 1995 (Chart 1). Coverage rose by between 13 and 15 percentage points in Prince Edward Island, Quebec and British Columbia, the three provinces that mandated PSL between 2010 and 2022. In contrast, coverage increased by at most five percentage points in Manitoba, Ontario, and Newfoundland and Labrador from 1995 to 2022.⁶

Chart 1
Percentage of employees who reported having paid sick leave with their job, by province, November 1995 to November 2022



Note: Main job held by employees aged 15 to 64.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Survey of Work Arrangements, 1995; and Labour Force Survey, November 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Both men and women reported an increase in PSL coverage. In November 2022, close to two-thirds of them reported having PSL benefits through their job, up from about 55% in November 1995 (Table 1).

However, coverage evolved differently across age groups. Men younger than 35 reported an increase in coverage of at least 10 percentage points from 1995 to 2022, while older men experienced moderate increases in coverage or no increases at all. Since PSL coverage tends to be lower among young workers than older workers, these changes over time reduced the differences in PSL coverage observed across age groups. For example, men aged 55 to 64 were 38 percentage points more likely to have PSL than men aged 15 to 24 in 2022, down from 49 percentage points in 1995. Different patterns were observed among women. Women aged 25 and older reported greater increases in coverage than those aged 15 to 24.

6. The differences in coverage observed between November 2020 and November 2022 are statistically significant at the 5% level for Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia.

Table 1
Percentage of employees who reported having paid sick leave with their job, by sex and selected personal characteristics, November 1995 to November 2022

	Men					Women				
	1995	2020	2021	2022	Change 1995 to 2022	1995	2020	2021	2022	Change 1995 to 2022
					percentage points					percentage points
	percent					percent				
All	56.6	58.6	59.6	63.4	6.8	54.8	60.7	60.5	65.1	10.3
Age										
15 to 24	18.9	23.6	25.1	29.2	10.3	21.9	22.0	23.0	26.4	4.5
15 to 24 (students excluded)	27.3	30.9	33.8	39.8	12.5	34.2	33.5	41.3	41.8	7.6
25 to 34	55.6	59.8	60.0	66.3	10.7	59.3	64.0	63.7	69.5	10.2
35 to 44	67.1	67.4	69.4	71.5	4.4	61.6	70.8	70.3	74.8	13.2
45 to 54	69.0	69.2	70.5	72.4	3.5	65.2	69.4	71.5	75.6	10.5
55 to 64	68.1	61.6	63.7	67.5	-0.6	57.3	63.9	63.2	66.7	9.4
Education										
High school education or less	46.5	41.3	42.2	46.2	-0.3	44.3	40.3	39.9	43.2	-1.1
Trades certificate or diploma	56.9	54.4	56.5	59.4	2.5	58.9	63.0	58.6	65.9	7.0
Some postsecondary education (PSE)	46.0	41.0	43.3	46.8	0.8	46.9	33.8	36.1	41.2	-5.7
PSE below a bachelor's degree	64.0	62.5	63.7	68.3	4.2	59.9	63.0	62.8	67.9	8.0
Bachelor's degree or higher education	79.9	76.6	76.5	79.9	0.0	72.9	74.1	73.4	77.7	4.8
Education—students excluded										
High school education or less	50.4	45.6	47.6	51.7	1.3	48.6	47.0	50.2	52.8	4.2
Trades certificate or diploma	57.0	54.9	56.6	59.9	2.9	60.1	64.2	59.2	66.1	6.1
Some postsecondary education (PSE)	55.6	54.5	55.1	57.7	2.1	60.1	52.9	55.5	58.5	-1.6
PSE below a bachelor's degree	65.9	63.4	65.6	70.1	4.2	61.7	64.5	64.9	70.0	8.3
Bachelor's degree or higher education	81.6	78.1	77.9	81.1	-0.5	74.3	76.3	75.2	79.7	5.4

Note: Main job held in November by employees aged 15 to 64.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Survey of Work Arrangements, 1995; and Labour Force Survey, November 2020, 2021 and 2022.

While differences in PSL coverage across age groups narrowed for men, differences in coverage across education levels remained relatively stable. Among men not enrolled in school, those with a bachelor's degree or higher education were about 30 percentage points more likely than their counterparts with a high school diploma or less education to report having PSL in 1995 and 2022. For women, the corresponding difference amounted to about 26 percentage points.⁷

In many cases, self-reported PSL coverage increased faster in jobs that traditionally exhibit relatively lower coverage. For example, coverage in full-time temporary jobs rose by about 15 percentage points for men and women from 1995 to 2022, at least twice the increase observed in full-time permanent jobs (Table 2).⁸ Among full-time permanent jobs, PSL coverage of newly hired men and women—those hired over the last 12 months—increased by between 20 and 23 percentage points, whereas coverage of men

7. Multivariate analyses show that for individuals not enrolled in school, most of the differences in coverage observed in 2022 between those with at most a high school diploma and those with a bachelor's degree or higher education—65% for men and 75% for women—can be accounted for by differences in (a) the industry of employment, (b) firm size, (c) union status, (d) part-time status, (e) the incidence of temporary jobs and (f) hourly wages. Likewise, most of the differences in coverage—78% for men and 64% for women—observed in 2022 between employees aged 15 to 24 and employees aged 55 to 64 can be accounted for by these factors.

8. Shift-share analyses suggest that about one-third of this 15 percentage point increase is driven by changes in the distribution of employment by industry between the mid-1990s and 2022.

and women working for their employer for at least 10 years rose little, if at all. Coverage in non-unionized jobs increased by about 13 percentage points, whereas coverage in unionized jobs increased by at most six points. Taken together, these numbers suggest that inequality in PSL coverage fell between several job types during that period.

Table 2
Percentage of employees who reported having paid sick leave with their job, by sex and selected job characteristics, November 1995 to November 2022

	Men					Women				
	1995	2020	2021	2022	Change 1995 to 2022 percentage points	1995	2020	2021	2022	Change 1995 to 2022 percentage points
All	56.6	58.6	59.6	63.4	6.8	54.8	60.7	60.5	65.1	10.3
Full-time job?										
No	7.9	17.3	16.5	16.4	8.5	21.5	24.0	21.8	25.4	4.0
Yes	62.0	63.9	65.6	68.9	6.9	68.2	71.5	72.1	76.7	8.5
Permanent job?										
No	16.7	24.4	22.9	27.3	10.6	20.6	28.5	30.0	31.5	10.9
Yes	61.9	62.6	64.2	67.2	5.3	60.2	65.0	64.7	69.7	9.5
Job type										
Full-time permanent	66.0	66.5	68.3	71.4	5.4	71.5	74.0	74.2	79.0	7.5
Part-time permanent	9.2	20.9	20.9	18.8	9.5	25.7	27.2	25.6	30.2	4.5
Full-time temporary	21.6	32.5	32.3	35.7	14.0	34.2	41.9	48.3	50.3	16.1
Part-time temporary	5.6	9.7	8.7	11.2	5.6	9.1	14.8	11.3	12.2	3.1
Job tenure										
1 year or less	26.0	34.2	37.6	43.2	17.2	23.5	33.7	36.2	42.3	18.8
1 to 5 years	49.2	55.0	56.3	61.8	12.6	48.0	53.7	54.9	61.3	13.3
5 to 10 years	65.3	66.2	68.0	71.0	5.7	66.4	69.3	69.0	73.8	7.4
10 to 20 years	77.3	72.5	73.9	75.8	-1.4	78.8	77.7	80.1	81.0	2.3
Over 20 years	84.0	74.3	77.3	77.0	-7.0	84.7	82.0	80.0	84.4	-0.3
Job tenure—full-time permanent										
1 year or less	38.0	46.7	52.6	57.5	19.5	43.2	53.7	57.4	66.2	23.0
1 to 5 years	57.6	63.3	65.1	70.3	12.7	62.7	68.2	68.9	75.6	12.9
5 to 10 years	69.1	69.7	71.6	73.8	4.6	76.2	75.8	75.9	79.5	3.3
10 to 20 years	79.0	74.7	75.9	77.8	-1.3	85.6	82.7	84.4	86.3	0.6
Over 20 years	86.0	75.5	78.3	79.3	-6.7	90.3	86.4	85.1	88.7	-1.6
Unionized or collective agreement?										
No	44.6	53.0	53.6	57.3	12.8	42.4	51.1	50.5	56.1	13.7
Yes	75.0	72.3	74.6	77.8	2.8	77.7	80.0	80.9	83.4	5.7
Unionized or collective agreement? Private sector employees										
No	43.3	51.8	52.5	56.2	12.9	41.9	49.2	48.9	54.9	13.0
Yes	66.8	57.9	61.9	66.1	-0.7	70.7	66.3	68.0	74.6	3.8

Notes: Main job held in November by employees aged 15 to 64. One to 5 years means 13 to 60 months; 5 to 10 years means 61 to 120 months; 10 to 20 years means 121 to 240 months.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Survey of Work Arrangements, 1995; and Labour Force Survey, November 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Self-reported paid sick leave coverage in 2022

As expected, self-reported PSL coverage varies substantially across wage deciles. Among employees not enrolled in school, 24% of those in the bottom decile of the hourly wage distribution reported having PSL benefits in 2022 (Table 3). In contrast, 87% of their counterparts in the top wage decile reported having PSL benefits that year.

Table 3
Percentage of employees who reported having paid sick leave with their job in 2022, by selected job characteristics

	All employees aged 15 to 64	Students excluded
	percent	
All	62.5	66.0
Industry		
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	34.9	36.9
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	70.6	70.7
Utilities	86.3	86.8
Construction	43.3	43.6
Manufacturing	64.5	65.2
Wholesale trade	72.5	73.1
Retail trade	44.2	51.7
Transportation and warehousing	63.3	64.1
Information and cultural industries	76.7	80.0
Finance and insurance	86.5	87.4
Real estate and rental and leasing	64.3	65.1
Professional, scientific and technical services	77.5	78.8
services	48.1	49.7
Educational services	77.9	82.9
Health care and social assistance	69.2	71.0
Arts, entertainment and recreation	39.2	47.8
Accommodation and food services	18.8	23.7
Other services (except public administration)	49.3	50.7
Public administration	89.0	90.8
Grocery stores	37.2	46.5
Gasoline stations	27.0	33.9
Nursing and residential care facilities	65.3	68.7
Child day-care services	56.9	58.5
Hourly wage decile		
Bottom	17.2	22.6
Second	32.3	35.8
Third	48.7	50.8
Fourth	62.1	63.5
Fifth	66.5	67.5
Sixth	72.4	72.9
Seventh	76.5	76.8
Eighth	79.4	79.5
Ninth	84.9	85.2
Top	86.7	87.0
Firm size (private sector employees)		
1 to 19 employees	32.8	34.9
20 to 99 employees	52.1	55.4
100 to 500 employees	62.6	65.6
More than 500 employees	67.3	72.3

Note: Main job held by employees aged 15 to 64.

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2022.

Self-reported PSL coverage also varies substantially across industries. In 2022, between 86% and 91% of employees in utilities, finance and insurance and public administration reported having PSL benefits in their job (Table 3). At the other end of the spectrum, at most 24% of employees in accommodation and food services—many of whom are aged 15 to 24 and in the bottom decile of the hourly wage distribution—reported having PSL coverage. Between 27% and 69% of individuals employed in grocery stores, gasoline stations, nursing and residential care facilities, and child day-care services reported having PSL in 2022. This confirms the notion that for many front-line workers, PSL coverage is still far from universal.

In the private sector, large firms and small firms offer PSL to markedly different degrees. About 70% of employees in large firms reported having PSL coverage in 2022, twice the percentage observed in small firms.⁹

Differences in PSL coverage across population groups are less substantial than the differences observed across industries, firm sizes or wage deciles, amounting to at most 13 percentage points. For instance, 69% of White women not enrolled in school and 56% of their West Asian counterparts reported having PSL coverage in 2022 (Table 4). Meanwhile, 69% of Chinese men not in school and 57% of their West Asian counterparts reported having such coverage. Multivariate analyses indicate that three-quarters of the differences in coverage between White women and West Asian women can be accounted for by group differences in (a) the industry of employment, (b) firm size, (c) union status, (d) part-time status, (e) the incidence of temporary jobs and (f) hourly wages. For Chinese men and West Asian men, these factors account for close to half of their differences in self-reported coverage.

Table 4

Percentage of employees who reported having paid sick leave with their job in 2022, by sex and selected personal characteristics

	Men		Women	
	Employees aged 15 to 64	Students excluded	Employees aged 15 to 64	Students excluded
	percent			
All	62.0	64.9	63.1	67.3
Population group				
South Asian	61.3	64.6	58.7	62.8
Chinese	65.7	68.5	63.9	68.0
Black	58.5	61.7	59.7	64.6
Filipino	60.4	64.3	61.0	66.3
Arab	62.1	67.0	53.2	58.5
Latin American	61.0	63.5	62.4	66.3
Southeast Asian	59.5	64.0	54.2	58.0
West Asian	54.6	57.2	51.6	55.6
Korean	60.3	64.2	54.3	57.8
White	62.6	65.3	64.8	68.8
Immigrant status				
Canadian-born	61.4	64.5	63.6	68.3
Recent immigrant	62.1	65.2	58.4	62.3
Other immigrant	66.5	67.9	65.4	67.2
Neither immigrant nor Canadian-born	52.8	57.5	51.3	57.8

Notes: Main job held by employees aged 15 to 64. Recent immigrants landed in Canada in 2012 or afterwards. Other immigrants landed in Canada before 2012.

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2022.

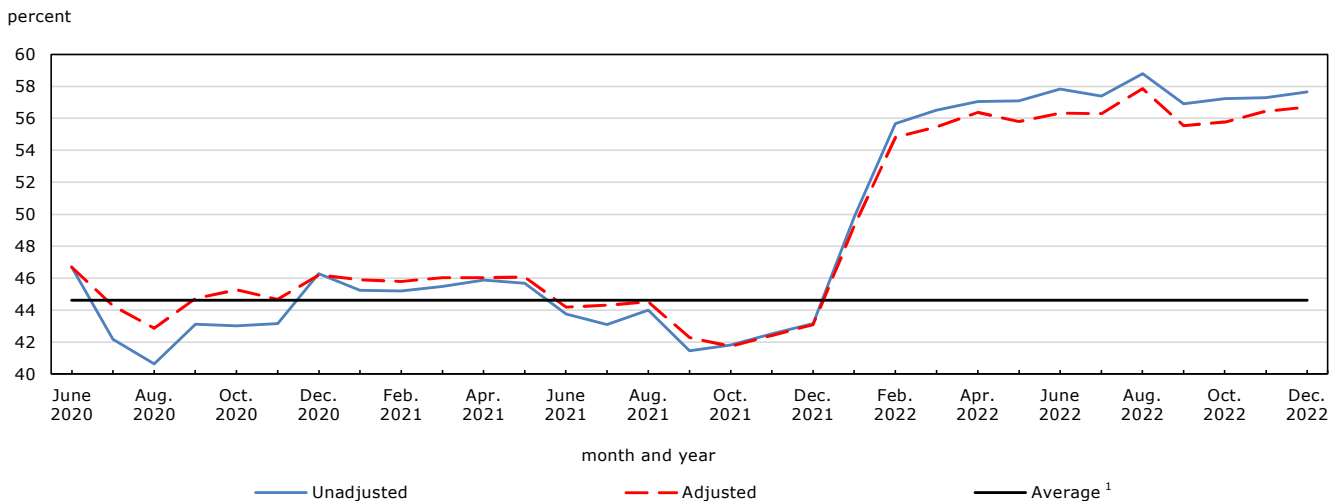
9. In this study, large firms are those with more than with 500 employees; small firms are those with fewer than 20 employees.

Self-reported coverage and the paid sick leave mandate implemented in British Columbia in January 2022

In January 2022, British Columbia became the first province to mandate up to five days of PSL for employees covered under its *Employment Standards Act*. The legislation requires employers to (a) provide eligible employees with five days of PSL per year if they need to stay home because they are sick or injured and (b) pay employees their regular wages for these days. To be eligible, employees must have worked at least 90 days for their employer and satisfy other conditions.¹⁰ For example, independent contractors, those in self-regulated professions (e.g., physicians, lawyers, accountants) and unionized employees are not eligible.

Chart 2 investigates how self-reported coverage in British Columbia evolved from June 2020 to December 2022 for a sample most likely covered by the new legislation: non-unionized employees aged 15 to 64 who are employed in non-professional occupations with at least three months of tenure with their employer.¹¹ Two time series are plotted: (a) an unadjusted series, which displays the self-reported coverage in British Columbia for this sample, and (b) an adjusted series, which controls for changes in the composition of employment that occurred during that period.¹²

Chart 2
Percentage of employees who reported having paid sick leave with their job in British Columbia, June 2020 to December 2022



1. Average of adjusted series from June 2020 to December 2021.

Notes: Adjusted estimates are obtained from a linear probability model of the likelihood of reporting having paid sick leave with one's job. Control variables include two-digit industries, firm size indicators, part-time status, a temporary job indicator and the natural logarithm of hourly wages. The model is estimated on data pooled from June 2020 to December 2022. The sample consists of non-unionized employees aged 15 to 64 who are employed in non-professional occupations with at least three months of tenure with their employer.

Source: Authors' calculations based on Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey.

10. For more information, see Government of British Columbia (2022).

11. Employees in federally regulated industries are included in the sample because identifying them precisely is difficult with the four-digit industry indicators included in the LFS. Since their PSL coverage remained unchanged from June 2020 to November 2022, their inclusion might increase PSL coverage somewhat but is unlikely to affect the changes in PSL coverage over time displayed in Chart 2.

12. The adjusted series is obtained from a linear probability model of the likelihood of reporting PSL in one's job. The model pools data from June 2020 to December 2022. Control variables include two-digit industries, firm size indicators, part-time status, a temporary job indicator and the natural logarithm of hourly wages. The month and year effects obtained from this model are anchored to the unadjusted PSL coverage in June 2020 to generate the adjusted series.

Both statistics show that self-reported PSL coverage increased by about 12 percentage points from December 2021 to February 2022. Since the adjusted series averaged 45% from June 2020 to December 2021, before the legislation was implemented, this increase is sizable in absolute and relative terms. In 2022, the adjusted series averaged 56%, thereby suggesting that the implementation of the legislation boosted self-reported coverage by roughly 11 percentage points.

Since most employees in the sample above are likely eligible for PSL under the new legislation, the fact that, all else equal, no more than 56% reported having PSL coverage in 2022 suggests that some respondents might (a) be unaware of the new legislation; (b) view mandated PSL as being provided by the province and **not** by their employer, i.e., as not being an employer benefit as stated in the SWA and LFS; and (c) work for employers who have not yet implemented the legislation (Hall et al. 2018; Maclean, Pichler and Ziebarth 2020).¹³ Respondents' awareness of legislative changes, the impact of mandates on the interpretation of survey questions and regulatory compliance could all influence reported PSL coverage. However, these questions are beyond the scope of this study and are left for future research.

Conclusion

Not only is working while sick detrimental to the sick employee, it can also harm colleagues in the case of contagious illness. But, without access to PSL benefits, employees whose job cannot be done from home can be forced to choose between their health, and that of other employees, and forgoing earnings. While eligible Canadian employees have access to EI sickness benefits for longer-term illnesses, there remains substantial heterogeneity in access to short-term PSL.

To inform discussions on this issue, this study assembled data from the 1995 SWA and the LFS from 2020 to 2022. The study shows that self-reported PSL coverage increased moderately from 1995 to 2022. In many cases, coverage appears to have risen faster in jobs that traditionally exhibit relatively low coverage than in other jobs. Nevertheless, large differences in self-reported coverage remain in 2022 across several dimensions, such as education, industry, firm size and deciles of the wage distribution. For example, employees in accommodation and food services—the vast majority of whom cannot work from home—are about 60 percentage points less likely than those working in utilities, finance and insurance, and public administration to report having access to PSL in their job.

In contrast, differences in self-reported PSL coverage across population groups are less pronounced. They amount to at most 13 percentage points and largely reflect the over-representation of some population groups in lower-wage jobs, small firms, non-unionized jobs and industries with lower PSL coverage.

Lastly, the study shows that for many front-line workers—such as those employed in grocery stores, gasoline stations, child day-care services, and nursing and residential care facilities—PSL coverage appears to be far from universal. Whether current recruitment difficulties in these sectors will lead employers to provide or increase PSL benefits in the near future remains to be seen.

13. In the sample used in Chart 2, 68% of direct respondents who provided complete labour force information and whose records passed all LFS edits reported having PSL coverage in December 2022, almost one year after the implementation of the legislation. This finding rules out the possibility that the relatively low self-reported PSL coverage reported in 2022 might be simply due to proxy responses, to imputation or to the fact that the legislation was recently implemented.

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