

## **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY 13**

### **Guidelines for Health and Maternity Needs**

The Commission on Ministry of Heartland Presbytery presents the following guidelines for the compassionate care of church personnel who are covered by the Board of Pensions in sickness or when children are added to the family. Sessions should adapt these guidelines to fit the needs of other church staff.

#### **A. SICK LEAVE**

1. Definition: When a teaching elder is physically incapable of performing the functions of ministry, and is normally under the care of a physician, and has every expectation of returning to work.
2. Terms: A minimum of 14 days within a calendar year with full salary, housing and pension benefits, which can be accumulated up to 42 days within a three-year period. Business and travel allowances as well as other reimbursable ministry expenses would not be payable during sick leave. Additional needs may be negotiable with the session.
3. Applications: Notice shall be given by the teaching elder (or a responsible family member) to the clerk of session or personnel committee as soon as sick leave is needed, at which time the terms would become applicable.

#### **B. LONG TERM SICK LEAVE**

1. Definition: When the medical prognosis is that the teaching elder may not be able to return to work for an extended period of time. (More than three months.)
2. Terms: Sick leave days will be deemed to be accumulated at the rate of 30 days a year for three years. Full salary, housing and pension benefits will continue for 90 days or until the disability benefits of the Major Medical Plan of the Board of Pensions takes effect.
3. Applications: Notice shall be given by the teaching elder (or responsible family member) to the clerk of session or personnel committee as soon as it is determined that disability benefits will be necessary. Notice will also be given to the Board of Pensions.

#### **C. MATERNITY LEAVE**

1. Definition: When a female teaching elder is to give birth.
2. Terms:
  - a. Up to 60 days leave at full salary and housing allowanceOR

90 days at 60% salary and housing allowance (for female teaching elders in the final days of pregnancy, delivery and post partum) would be included in the terms of call.

- b. travel allowance would be discontinued during the leave to help provide for pulpit supply.
  - c. vacation and sick leave may be used to supplement the leave at the teaching elder's discretion.
  - d. major medical and teaching elder's pension will be continued by the congregation at the full salary and allowance level for the maternity leave period.
  - e. If the teaching elder is unable to return to work at the end of the leave agreed upon, the session, in consultation with the Commission on Ministry, would take action appropriate to the particular situation.
3. Application: Maternity leave shall be negotiated with the session at least four months before the anticipated birth. Unforeseen complications in the pregnancy and/or delivery may make adjustments in these plans necessary.

#### **D. ADOPTION LEAVE**

- 1. Definition: When a teaching elder, either female or male, either married or single, adopts a child, consideration of an appropriate adoption leave may be negotiated with the session.
- 2. Terms:
  - a. If the teaching elder believes it necessary for the "bonding" of child and parent, accumulated sick leave may be used for this purpose.
  - b. Beyond the sick leave terms, if the teaching elder chooses to remain at home to care for the child, one of the following options may be negotiated.
    - (1) 45 days at 75% of the annual salary and housing allowance
    - OR
    - (2) 60 days at 60% of the annual salary and housing allowance

#### **E. PATERNITY LEAVE**

- 1. Definition: When a male teaching elder's wife gives birth, and he chooses to remain at home to care for his wife and child/children.
- 2. Terms: Then one of the following options may be negotiated:

- a. If the wife is under a physician's care, bed-ridden, or in a hospital as the result of the birth (or miscarriage), sick leave condition shall apply for the teaching elder.
  - b. Beyond the sick leave conditions, one of the following options may be negotiated with the session:
    - (1) 7 days at 100% of salary and housing allowance,  
OR
    - (2) 14 days at 75% salary and housing allowance,  
OR
    - (3) 21 days at 60% salary and housing allowance.
  - c. Pension and medical benefits will be continued by the congregation at the full salary and housing allowance level for the paternity leave.
3. Application: Application for paternity leave will be negotiated by the teaching elder with the session at least four months before the anticipated birth. Unforeseen complications in the pregnancy and/or delivery may make adjustments in these plans necessary.

#### **F. FAMILY EMERGENCY LEAVE**

1. Definition: When a sudden emergency arises with the teaching elder's immediate family which requires his/her presence, rendering the teaching elder unable to perform the functions of ministry for an indefinite period of time.
2. Terms:
  - a. Sick leave conditions will apply while the teaching elder is unable to perform the functions of ministry.
  - b. Long term family illness needs (spouse or child) may be negotiated with the session with the following suggested guidelines:
    - (1) 45 days at 100% of annual salary and housing allowance  
OR
    - (2) 60 days at 75% of annual salary and housing allowance  
OR
    - (3) 90 days at 60 % of annual salary and housing allowance.
3. Applications: Application for the family emergency leave of less than seven days will be through the clerk of session or personnel committee. Longer family emergency leaves require negotiation with the session.

## **G. FAMILY DEATH**

In the case of a family member of the teaching elder or their spouse, a period of up to four days should be granted to be with other family members. That means, if the death occurs locally, up to four days is appropriate; if the death/funeral/burial is “out of state” or some distance from home, time for travel should be added to the four days.

## **H. SUMMARY**

These guidelines are offered in the judgment of the Commission on Ministry as fair, reasonable and compassionate suggestions that teaching elders and sessions may consider in negotiating family needs when a new child becomes a part of the family. It is not the intent of the Commission on Ministry that these guidelines should be limiting. Sessions are free to exercise their compassion in more generous ways if they deem it appropriate. The presbytery urges congregations to follow these guidelines. If needed, Commission on Ministry may be called upon to assist with the negotiations in unusual circumstances.

The teaching elder may elect, with the approval of the session, to use vacation time in conjunction with sick leave. The Commission on Ministry does not encourage the combining of vacation time with sick leave because they are designed for two distinctly different purposes. The Commission on Ministry stands ready to assist teaching elders and sessions in the process of negotiation around an illness or when children are added to the family of a teaching elder.