

# Obama wants American women to have paid maternity leave

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(HealthDay)—President Barack Obama hosted a daylong summit Monday to persuade more employers to adopt family friendly policies, but he said the federal government itself needs to do more in that regard.

For example, he'd like to change the fact that the United States is the only industrialized nation that doesn't mandate paid leave for [new mothers](#), the *Associated Press* reported. "Only three countries in the world report that they don't offer paid [maternity leave](#)—three—and the United States is one of them," Obama said in his weekly address. "It's time to change that. A few states have acted on their own to give workers paid family leave, but this should be available to everyone, because all Americans should be able to afford to care for a family member in need."

It's unclear how Obama would fund a national system of paid maternity

leave. In a conference call with reporters Sunday, Obama adviser Valerie Jarrett said the president wants to start a national conversation about the issue. "Cost is an issue for any federal program and we need to make sure we do this in a way where we are not raising taxes on middle-class families," she said. "But we also know what a good investment in our workforce it would be if they had paid leave, and that investment will pay great returns."

California, New Jersey and Rhode Island have a system of paid maternity leave, the *AP* reported.

**More information:** [Health Highlights: June 24, 2014](#)

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