

# Bill 11 Sick Notes

May 2026



I'm Kevin Rebeck, President of the Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL).

The MFL is Manitoba's central labour body, made up of more than 30 affiliated unions representing the interests of more than 130,000 unionized workers from every sector and every region in our province in the public and private sectors, and the building trades. The MFL works to promote good jobs, fairness in the workplace, and social and economic justice for all.

I'm glad to be here today to support this bill which follows the advice given to the Minister from the Labour Management Review Committee (LMRC). The LMRC is made up of business and labour representative and strives to provide consensus advice to government on employment standards and the labour relations act changes.

This bill follows the advice of Doctors Manitoba who calculated that over 600,000 sick notes are requested annually in Manitoba, with each note taking 3-4 minutes to write. This adds up to over 36,000 hours of physician time just writing sick notes.

Sick notes are not an effective way to manage sick leaves in a workplace and are of little practical value.

Requiring a worker to see a doctor when they are infectious can increase the workers exposure to other illnesses and is bad for public health.

Many short-term illnesses, such as the migraines, headaches, or stomach issues, do not have objective verification methods. By the time an employee visits a doctor, they are often recovering or symptom free, making the requirement largely administrative rather than medical.

Almost every other province has taken steps to put restrictions on when employers can request an employee to get a sick note and we are glad Manitoba is implementing restrictions to curb this wasteful practice.

Changing the rules to limit when a sick note for short-term illness can be asked for is good for everyone.

From a worker perspective, this means workers can rest and recover rather than drag themselves into a doctors office while they are infectious and weak. It means they don't have to go through the hassle of finding time to go to a doctor's office for an illness that doesn't warrant the visit. Workers are better able to see a doctor when necessary, if the doctors aren't busy wasting time writing sick notes.

It is good for employers to shift to a better attendance management system that doesn't rely on a verification system that doesn't verify anything medical. It means workers can be trusted to stay home when they are ill and be more productive by not coming in to avoid the hassle of getting a sick note and infecting others.

For Doctors, it means less wasted time on writing non-medical informed notes that are really just repeating what a patient tells them. And more time to help Manitobans who need medical attention.

I want to commend Doctors Manitoba for working with employers and labour on these recommendations and for their work on a tool kit for employers to review as they modify their attendance management systems, ideally in collaboration with labour.

And thank you to government, once more, for listening to the consensus advice of the Labour Management Review Committee. The LMRC takes its role seriously to provide good advice and, unlike the previous Conservative government who asked for advice and then ignored it, we appreciate this government listening to the LMRC advice and acting on it.

Employers and Workers have to live with the impact legislation has in the workplace and are best positioned to give advice that can be respected and followed by future governments and serve us all well.

Thank you.