

**APPENDIX 45**  
**THE PRESBYTERY OF HUNTINGDON**  
**PASTOR AND/OR FAMILY ILLNESS AND INJURY LEAVE POLICY**  
**(Adopted November 13, 2007)**

**1. PURPOSE:**

This policy addresses procedures when a Minister of the Word and Sacrament or a Commissioned Lay Pastor and their congregation encounter instances when the pastor is unable to fully serve the requirements of the terms of call because of illness, injury, or other circumstances beyond his or her control - concerning self and/or family members. This may involve absence for days, weeks, and/or months. The spirit of the policy is one of trusting cooperation focused on the mutual well-being of our churches, pastors, and the presbytery - the overall quality of our witness to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This policy is not intended to cover all situations, but within its provisions rests principles which should be adapted and consistently applied by all parties with grace, love, hope, and faith.

Maternity/paternity leave for births and/or adoptions are not sickness/illness and as such are covered under a separate policy.

**2. DEFINITIONS:**

A **Illness/injury** - any physical, mental, emotional or other condition which requires or makes prudent temporary relief of normal pastoral responsibilities for a consecutive number of days, weeks, *up to twenty-nine (29) days*.

**B. Short Term Disability** - any condition, physical or emotional, which requires or makes it prudent for the pastor to avoid the fulfillment of normal responsibilities for a period of *thirty (30) to eighty-nine (89) days*.

**C. Long Term Disability** - a period of *ninety (90) days or longer* of illness/injury which makes it prudent for the pastor to avoid, or makes it obvious that the pastor is unable to fulfill normal responsibilities. The following definition of disability in the Benefits Plan shall apply: *the inability of a Member (minister member of the Benefits Plan) due to sickness or bodily injury to perform substantially all the material duties of his or her regular work or any other type of work that would afford a reasonably comparable level of income.* (Benefits Plan, Article II, Sec. 2.1 (h))

**D. Intermittent Disability** - The pastor, due to a single or multiple illness(es) or injury(ies), alternates between periods of being able to perform all or most regular responsibilities and periods of injury/illness, short-term, and/or long-term disability.

**E. Presbytery Consultation Process** - The requirements of a pastor and session to work together with the COM and collaborate in all illness/injuries which have the possibility of developing into disability events (short-term, long-term, intermittent) in ways that protect the health and well-being of the church, the pastor, and the family. The Presbytery Consultation Process is intended as a collaborative process for sharing of information and decision-making. This will include medical, legal, and polity concerns as required by the Board of Pensions and the Presbytery of Huntingdon and other programs involved that render assistance (state, federal, insurance, etc.).

**F. Family Members** - Spouse, children, aging and incapacitated parents who encounter illness/injury and/or disability. Other significant relatives may be included upon consultation within the Presbytery Consultation Process with the pastor, session, and presbytery.

**3. PASTORAL ILLNESS/INJURY:**

A. For illness/injury, leave shall be accumulated at the rate of 2.50 days per month\* of service a total of thirty (30) days per annum, with a total accumulation of no more than ninety (90) days during a particular

pastorate within the presbytery. No more than four (4) Sundays may be used as illness/injury days per

calendar year. Pastor may use vacation in lieu of sick leave, or use vacation after accumulated illness/injury leave is exhausted if additional Sundays are required for illness/injuries.

B. Should illness/injury develop into short-term disability (thirty days absence and beyond), while the pastor is using accumulated injury/illness leave and/or vacation days, the session will notify COM for prayerful support and for avenues of meeting pastoral needs in the congregation. *The Presbytery Consultation Process begins upon this notification.* During short-term disabilities, session will ensure full compensation according to the terms of call.

C. Should the short-term disability (use of accumulated sick leave and/or vacation time) develop into a long-term disability (ninety days and beyond with the pastor requiring additional absences), the COM in the Presbytery Consultation Process must act and bring relevant information and guidance to bear on the situation. If it seems wise to all parties, the pastor may request *unpaid leave of absence* without ending the terms of call in the hopes that the pastor will be able to return to the congregation. Further absences will not exceed a total of one-hundred twenty days (120) - no matter what the source (vacation, unpaid leave). Use of the manse including utilities will be negotiated during the Presbytery Consultation Process in the event of unpaid leaves of absences - and be dependent upon the individual pastoral and congregational circumstances. In the same way, housing allowances may be negotiated. In both instances, compassion and common sense shall guide all parties in preventing pastors and families from becoming homeless during adjustments and transitions.

*NOTE: The Presbytery Consultation Process initiates early on the involvement of the Committee on Ministry. It requires a three-way consultation among the pastor, session, and COM during a time when the pastor may be exhausting accumulated sick leave plus vacation time and the health issues have not been resolved (even if the pastor is in the process of applying for disability through the Board of Pensions). Consultations as prudently necessary and or as required by medical, legal, and polity guidelines to ensure that the needs of the pastor and congregation continue to be met and the viability of the call remains sound Careful attention to the requirements of the Board of Pensions will guide the Presbytery Consultation Process.*

D. Should illness/injury day usage accumulate and create an intermittent disability situation where the pastor's absences consume allotted illness/injury days, perhaps vacation, and unpaid leave, the Presbytery Consultation Process is automatically initiated as described in this policy. This will occur as if the event or multiple illness/injury events are a short-term disability (twenty-nine days, four Sundays per annum) or long-term disability (thirty or more days).

\*Calculated at the rate: thirty (30) days per annum, divided by twelve (12) months, equals 2.50. This is a standard calculation for Presbytery for contracts to figure pro-rated vacation days.

#### **4. PASTORAL ILLNESS/INJURY RECORD KEEPING AND NOTIFICATION:**

A. For illnesses/injuries of less than fourteen (14) consecutive days, the pastor notifies the Clerk of Session upon each occurrence for appropriate record keeping of the accumulated sick leave days utilized/accrued. This should be recorded in the minutes of the session meetings in the following format: \_\_\_\_\_ *illness/injury days used*, \_\_\_\_\_ *accumulated illness/injury days remain*.

B. Periods of leave for illness/injury of fifteen (15) consecutive days or longer and less than twenty-nine (29) days shall be reported to both the Clerk of Session and Presbytery. The pastor, clerk, or a delegated representative shall provide the statement which shall include:

- a. Diagnosis as per the pastor's physician, using the Board of Pension's medical diagnosis and classification system.
- b. Advisement of the avoidance of normal responsibilities for a specified period of time.
- c. Total number of illness/injury days the pastor has used, noting particularly the number of Sundays, and the remaining accumulated illness/injury days available.

C. At the request of the pastor, vacation may be substituted for sick leave. Vacation may also be utilized

to extend the time of leave due to illness/injury beyond accumulated sick leave. The presbytery should also be advised on the total number of vacation days utilized and remaining.

**5. PASTORAL DISABILITY AND THE PRESBYTERY CONSULTATION PROCESS:** A. When illness/injury leave requires an extended period of time, thirty (30) days or beyond, as indicated by a physician or medical provider, the pastor and session and COM shall consult with one another and the Board of Pensions regarding guidelines and policies for compensation, for pastoral services and for initial discussions regarding continuation or discontinuation of the current call. Together, these parties shall make provision for next steps.

B. If the consultation results in the concurrence that the pastoral relationship shall continue beyond the total illness/injury days accumulated by the pastor and vacation days and addition granted unpaid leave, the use of the manse and utilities shall also be continued - as well as housing allowances. Because the congregation must provide full salary and benefits for the ninety (90) days during the time period the Board of Pensions is to make a disability determination, it is more advisable to have the pastor apply for disability sooner than later. The pastor must regularly consult with both the session and COM during this time. If the Board of Pensions determines that the pastor is disabled, then the pastoral relationship must be dissolved (and not modified in any way to less-than-full-time status, which could void disability determination and adversely effect the pastor).

C. If the pastoral relationship must be dissolved because of disability determination, the pastor shall proceed with the Board of Pensions through the disability process. Use of the manse and full utilities and housing allowances may be negotiated in the Presbytery Consultation Process.

D. The COM and session shall establish a schedule of regular consultations with the pastor and/or authorized representative to reevaluate agreements, process and the well-being of the congregation, pastor and pastor's family if any - until the call is dissolved, and beyond.

**6. PASTORAL ILLNESS/INJURY AND DISABILITY LEAVE FOR FAMILY MEMBERS (including deaths):**

A. When a pastor has a need for care of family members due to illness/injury, , short, intermittent, or long-term disability and requires utilization of illness/injury days, the Presbytery Consultation Process begins, as described above in #3 applies. The session and/or COM may request documentation as to the dependency and/or residency status of the family member - and/or the condition as well as the extent of the relationship with the person(s) for which the pastor is required to care.

B. Should consultations result in a dissolution of the call, the same policies above apply.

C. Pastors may choose to take illness/injury days for grief work, and for practical matters relating to the loss of a loved one.

**7. PASTORAL/FAMILY MEMBER DEATH WHILE IN SERVICE:**

A. Should illness/injury of a pastor eventuate in death while serving a congregation with a call, or while working through the disability application process, family members residing in a manse prior to the pastor's death shall have use of the manse with full utilities for no less than sixty (60) days. Following the same principle, a congregation will continue providing a housing allowance for sixty (days). Additional use of the manse and/or utilities, and housing allowances, may be negotiated.

B. In the event of a pastor's family member's death, the session and COM will consult with the pastor for pastoral care and together grant grieving leave and the utilization of illness/injury days as seems wise and needed for the well-being of all concerned.

**8. INSTITUTION OF THIS POLICY WITH PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS:**

A. Review and approval by COM and Presbytery.

B. Inclusion in the annual change in terms of call for each member of presbytery accomplished at the congregational meeting conducted for this purpose. Or, for interims, temporary supplies, stated supplies and lay pastors, at a session meeting when a contract is renewed. Recommended for 2008, required by all for 2009.

C. For newly called pastors, the policy provisions will be included in the initial terms of call to serve the congregation in 2008 and beyond.

D. Sessions may amend this policy or craft their own, but any amendments or alternative policy must be approved by both the congregation and the presbytery through its Committee on Ministry at the time of approval of terms of call.

**9. COMPUTATION OF ALLOWABLE DAYS FOR INSTALLED PASTORS AND COMMISSIONED LAY PASTORS ALREADY SERVING:**

Pastors serving four (4) years in the same call within the Presbytery of Huntingdon will automatically be credited with the full ninety (90) days. Pastors serving less than four years will calculate 2.58 days per month as per length of service, minus identifiable days formally or informally utilized for illness/injury absences as identified in this policy. In both instances, the number of days credited will be included in the congregation's initial approval of the annual terms of call and this policy.