

eBook

Paid Time Off

The Health & Dental Practice Owner's Guide



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How to give the people what they want

...legally, fairly, and in a way that improves employee and patient satisfaction, that is.

Your dental or healthcare practice employees work hard. Really hard. They keep your practice humming and they help you deliver the best patient care possible. And they deserve a break now and then.

When they get one, studies show they come back [happier](#), [healthier](#), and [more productive](#). It's good for them and it's [good for your business](#). And in some states, it's the law.

So how do you create a fair, effective paid time off policy that keeps your employees happy and your practice's lights on? We'll break down the fundamentals, the tricky details, and the best practices for health and dental practices like yours.

Understanding paid time off

Paid time off (that's PTO if you're in a hurry, even though it's not actually shorter) is exactly what it sounds like. PTO refers to time your employees can accrue and exchange for time away from work — while still getting paid.

But why should you have to pay people to not work?

Vacations aren't the law, but in some states, you're required to offer paid time off. You may also be required to provide sick leave. Sometimes this all falls under the umbrella of PTO, sometimes it doesn't.

There are some nuances to categorizing types of time off, **so let's start with some definitions.**



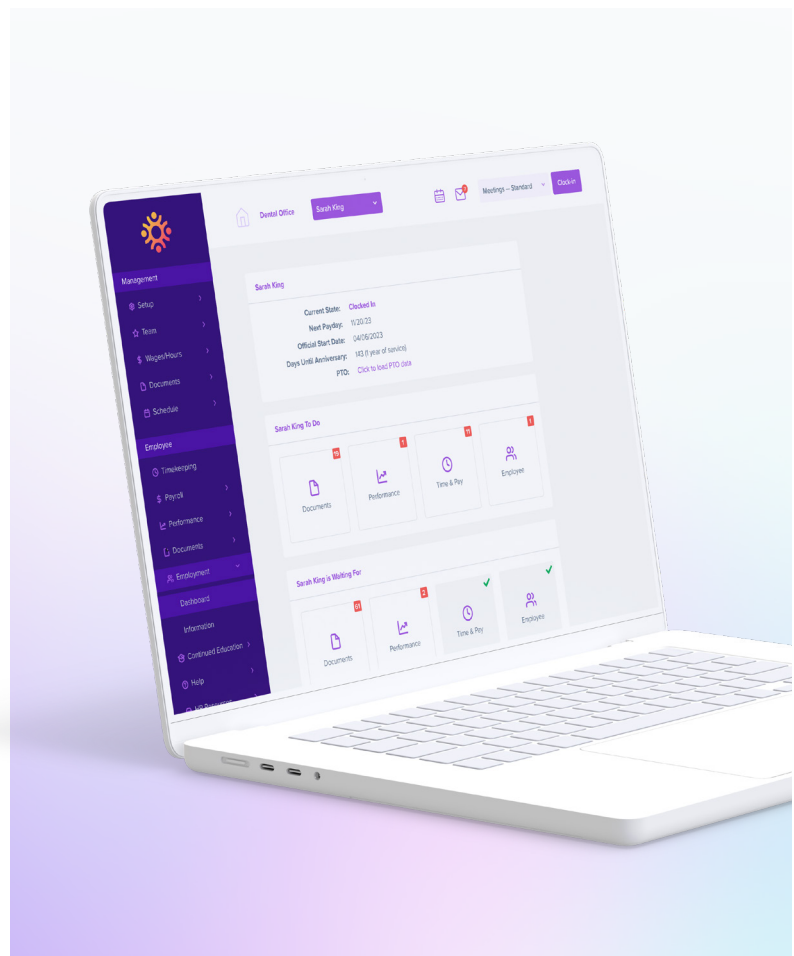
Types of Paid Time Off

	Definition	Reason for the absence	Required?	Payout at separation?
Paid Time Off (PTO)	Compensated time away from the workplace. This includes vacations, personal days, jury duty, parental leave, etc. May also include sick leave, if not separately specified	Any reason, no need to provide a reason	In some states	In some states, depending on policies
Vacation Time Off	Compensated time away from the workplace that has been specifically designated for rest and relaxation. Vacation time off cannot be used for sick leave or personal emergencies	When tracked separately, employees may need to specify that they are taking vacation days	No	In some states, depending on policies
Sick Leave	Health-related absences only. Can be used to recover from illness, routine doctor's appointments, emergencies, or to care for a sick family member	Can only be used when employees or their family members need medical, dental, or other health care	In some states	No

How do you stay compliant without getting a headache?

Keeping up with PTO laws is exhausting—but HR for Health does it for you. Our software automatically updates state-specific PTO and sick leave laws so you never have to worry about compliance.

[Learn more about HR for Health](#)



Paid Time Off

Paid time off is the general term for, well, paid time off. Whether your employees need a break to recover from the sniffles or get a tan on some sunny beach, PTO keeps their paychecks flowing.

Combined PTO can be used for any reason.

If you choose to keep your time off policies simplified (and your state allows it) you may offer PTO without differentiating between the reasons employees might need some time away. These reasons could be vacations, illness, jury duty, you name it. Or don't — if you're not particularly concerned with your employees' reasons for absences, this is a flexible, admin-friendly policy that tallies time, not excuses.

Specified PTO uses depend on the reason for the absence.

Many employers choose to break up their PTO benefits into sick leave, vacation time, and catch-all PTO. If you do this, your employee will have to identify the type of leave they need to use. This helps you keep tabs on your schedule, and your employees will be required to give you more advance notice. If you offer specified time off benefits, note that standalone sick leave will not be required to pay out at separation of employment. More on that later.

Vacation Time Off

You'll sometimes hear people referring to PTO as vacation time, but that's a little bit of an oversimplification, and it presumes that sick leave exists separately. It's not completely false, but it's not 100% accurate either.

All vacation time is PTO, but not all PTO is vacation time.

Vacation time is set aside for the express purpose of taking a break. It's not meant for calling in sick, attending work training, or bereavement. Vacation time requires advance planning and you can expect your employees to provide you plenty of advance notice. These hours are truly benefits, and should be set aside exclusively for some well-deserved R&R.



Sick Leave

The concept of sick leave seems straightforward, but in the United States, there is no universally accepted definition. The U.S. Department of Labor has described guidelines for FMLA — the Family and Medical Leave Act — but these are for longer periods of time for employees to deal with unavoidable medical matters. Plus, FMLA goes unpaid.

Most employees, when they claim sick leave, use it when they're under the weather. Nobody wants to be treated by a health or dental professional with a nasty cough or a runny nose, so most of these employers will gladly accept this excuse.

This can sometimes lead to the misconception that sick leave is impossible to plan. Not true. If you have an employee who is pregnant, for example, there'll be a battery of doctor's appointments along the way. Another employee may plan a medical procedure or need time to recover after an injury. In fact, with the exception of an emergency or sudden illness, employees should request sick leave with as much advance notice as possible.

No federal laws mandate offering PTO or sick leave to any employees. But of course, it's not that simple.

State-Specific PTO and Sick Leave Laws

No federal laws mandate offering PTO or sick leave to any employees. But of course, it's not that simple.

Several states and specific regions do require these benefits. Most of those that have this law don't usually mandate sick leave and general time off. The states that require offering PTO are typically referring to combined PTO, which would include sick leave. It's simpler that way.

Also, the definitions of paid time off and vacation time may come into play. A few states have payout laws specifically related to vacation time, but not for combined PTO. None require you to pay out sick leave at separation of employment.

As complicated as it already is, these laws are changing all the time and the list of states requiring these benefits keeps growing. If you're using HR for Health, you'll be among the first to know about these changes so you can plan accordingly.

States That Require PTO and/or Sick Leave Benefits

	Paid Time Off	Sick Leave
Arizona	N/A	Accrual of 1 hour per 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours per year (up to 24 hours per year for small employers)
California	PTO is not mandatory, but if offered, payout is required upon separation.	Accrual of 1 hour per 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours per year. Most employees are eligible and some cities mandate more sick leave hours per year.
Colorado	PTO is not mandatory, but if offered, payout is required upon separation.	Accrual of 1 hour per 30 hours worked, up to 48 hours per year.
Connecticut	N/A	Accrual of 1 hour per 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours per year.
Illinois	Accrual of 1 hour per 40 hours work, minimum of 40 hours per calendar year. Payout is required upon separation.	N/A
Louisiana	PTO is not mandatory, but if offered, payout is required upon separation.	N/A
Maine	Accrual of 1 hour per 40 hours work, minimum of 40 hours per calendar year. Payout is required upon separation.	N/A
Maryland	N/A	Accrual of 1 hour per 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours per year.
Massachusetts	PTO is not mandatory, but if offered, payout is required upon separation.	Accrual of 1 hour per 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours per year.
Michigan	N/A	Accrual of 1 hour per 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours per year.
Minnesota	N/A	Accrual of 1 hour per 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours per year.
Montana	PTO is not mandatory, but if vacation time is offered, payout is required upon separation. Combined PTO payout is determined by contract.	N/A

States That Require PTO and/or Sick Leave Benefits

	Paid Time Off	Sick Leave
Nebraska	PTO is not mandatory, but if offered, payout is required upon separation.	N/A
Nevada	Accrual of 0.01923 hours per hour worked (about 40 hours of PTO per year). Applies to employers with 50 or more employees.	N/A
New Jersey	N/A	Accrual of 1 hour per 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours per year.
New Mexico	N/A	Accrual of 1 hour per 30 hours worked, up to 64 hours per year.
New York	PTO is not mandatory, but if offered, payout is required upon separation.	Accrual varies depending on employer size: 5-99 employees: up to 40 hours per year 100+ employees: up to 56 hours per year
North Carolina	PTO is not mandatory, but if vacation time is offered, payout is required upon separation. Combined PTO payout is determined by contract.	N/A
North Dakota	PTO is not mandatory, but if offered, payout is required upon separation.	N/A
Ohio	PTO is not mandatory, but if vacation time is offered, payout is required upon separation. Combined PTO payout is determined by contract.	N/A
Oregon	N/A	Accrual of 1 hour per 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours per year.
Washington	N/A	Accrual of 1 hour per 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours per year.
Washington, D.C.	PTO is not mandatory, but if offered, payout is required upon separation.	Accrual varies depending on employer size: Fewer than 24 employees: 1 hour per 87 hours worked (up to 3 days) 25-99 employees: 1 hour per 43 hours worked (up to 5 days) 100+ employees: 1 hour per 37 hours worked (up to 7 days)

Wondering whether you need to pay out PTO when an employee leaves?

HR for Health's system automatically calculates payouts based on your state's laws and your policies, so you don't have to stress over compliance.

PTO FAQs

There's a lot more to know about PTO.

Do I have to offer PTO, vacation, or sick leave?

If your state is on the list above, you already know the answer to this.

If not, then no. Technically, U.S. employers in those states don't have to offer any PTO whatsoever. But it is standard practice. Around 84% of health services workers have access to paid vacation time and most get sick leave.

Time and time again, studies have shown that employees who take vacations and personal days are more productive, more satisfied, and happier in the workplace. If you're looking for new talent, make sure you're offering the benefits that quality candidates expect. And if you're in the health or dental profession, it only makes sense to offer sick leave. Your patients don't want to come to your practice for treatment and leave with the flu.

How do employees accrue or collect paid time off?

Accrual is the gradual accumulation or earnings of paid time off. The cadence and quantity of accruals can depend on the employee's hours worked, length of service, and details outlined in your employment contract.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, most first-year workers earn 11 days of paid vacation per year. Those with longer tenures naturally earn more. Across the board, employees usually get a week's worth of sick leave every year. If you're combining PTO, this is 18 – 31 days' worth of benefits per year.

You'll notice that this is much more than the minimum amount offered by states that require PTO.

How far in advance should employees ask for time off?

Have you ever heard someone refer to PTO as "prepare the others?" It's a joke, but not entirely. Employees should request time off with as much notice as possible so that you can quite literally prepare the others in your practice and redistribute the workload.

Typically, you'll want employees to request time off at least 2 to 4 weeks in advance. This gives you time to adjust staffing levels and make sure patient needs are met. For longer absences (especially during busy seasons) you may require your employees to give you more of a heads up.

That said, life happens. Build in some flexibility for unexpected situations like sudden illness, family emergencies, or last-minute obligations.

PTO FAQs

Can I turn down PTO requests?

Sometimes employees ask for time off at the worst possible moment. PTO is a benefit that employees are entitled to use, but it doesn't mean that every request is a guaranteed yes. You can say no if you really need to.

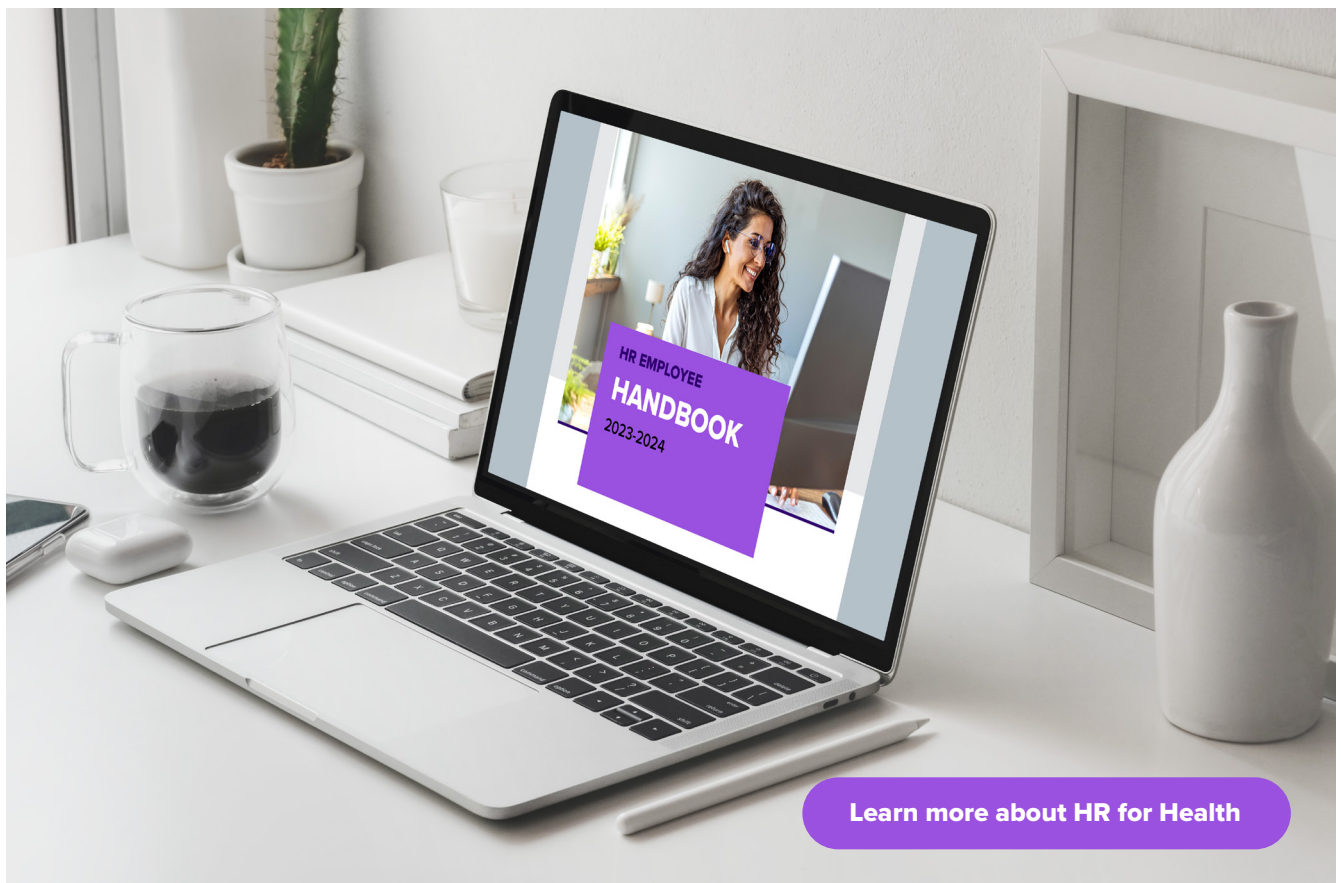
If you must deny PTO, you should have a solid reason and communicate it clearly. Be fair, explain the denial as best you can, and for goodness sakes, don't backtrack on an approved request at the last minute.

What happens to unused time off if employees quit or are terminated?

It'd be pretty amazing if your employees used exactly 100% of their accrued paid time off during their employment! But truth be told, about half of all working Americans leave PTO on the table.

At the end of an employment contract, there are a few things that could happen to this unused time.

If you offer PTO benefits in California, Colorado, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New York, North Dakota, or Washington, D.C., this time off is considered earned wages. When you part ways with an employee, you will be required to pay out their PTO bank.



PTO FAQs

What happens to unused time off if employees quit or are terminated? (cont.)

If you offer vacation time benefits (separate from combined PTO) and your employee is located in Montana, North Carolina, Ohio, or Rhode Island, you will be required to pay the balance at the point of separation.

No states require you to pay out sick leave.

If your state hasn't been listed here, you're not legally required to pay employees their remaining PTO when their employment ends. It'd be nice if you did, though.

Employment ends for all kinds of reasons, but in the case of PTO payouts, it rarely matters if your employee is fired, laid off, retires, or quits voluntarily. If your state considers PTO or vacation time off as wages, then you're required to pay them. If your state doesn't require it, then you probably don't have to pay. There may be limitations depending on how long the employee has been working for you or the nitty gritty of your employment contract, so check your local laws and paperwork to be sure.

HR for Health's PTO Management

HR for Health takes the guesswork out of managing unused PTO when employees leave. Our system automatically calculates PTO payouts based on your state's requirements and your practice's policies, ensuring compliance with labor laws while keeping payroll accurate.

With built-in tracking, employees always have a clear view of their PTO balances, and employers can easily review and approve requests in real time. Plus, HR for Health's expert-backed resources help you navigate legal nuances, reducing your risk of disputes or costly compliance mistakes.

By streamlining PTO tracking and payout calculations, HR for Health ensures your practice stays efficient, compliant, and stress-free—so you can focus on what matters most: patient care.

Learn more about HR for Health



Types of PTO Policies and Arrangements

There's obviously no one-size-fits-all approach to PTO, and how you structure your policy will depend on factors like state laws, office size, and your workplace culture. Some policies keep it simple, while others allow for more flexibility. Let's go over the most common PTO structures so you can determine what works best for your practice.

Anniversary Year vs. Calendar Year

First, decide what you'd consider as a year. Do you want a PTO policy that matches the calendar on the wall, or would you rather tie it to your employee's work anniversary?

If you choose the work anniversary, you can grant PTO based on their hire date and their time off will reset each year on that date. It's personalized to each employee, so nobody's stuck with an odd amount of PTO. However, this requires good bookkeeping or [a quality HR software](#).

If you choose to measure years by the calendar, everyone's on the same cycle with a reset date on January first, no matter what. This is much simpler for admin purposes, but it can be awkward for employees who are hired later in the year and have no time saved up for the holidays.

Lump-Sum

With a lump-sum PTO policy, employees are granted a set amount of PTO all at once. You could award all of this time at the start of the year, the day of hire, or at a specific cadence. Some employers find it convenient to dole out PTO annually, quarterly, or even as a bonus for job performance.



This is much easier than calculating PTO earned by hours worked, so it's great for math-phobes.

Employees like it because they don't have to do any math either — they'll know exactly how many vacation days they can take. At the same time, employees might use up all their time on vacations without considering those one-off needs, like a sudden trip to the dentist. The next thing they know, their PTO balance is in the red or unavailable when they need it most. Or worse, they use up all that PTO as soon as it's available... and then leave.

Front-Loading

Another way to do lump-sum PTO is by offering a whole year's worth of time off either on the first day of the calendar year, anniversary, or even as soon as you hire.

Yes, this means employees could have full access to their PTO balance from day one. This structure is simple to manage and can be a strong motivator for employees because they don't have to wait for time off to accumulate. If something comes up early and they need to take a day off, they can.

This also means that theoretically, a brand-new employee could take all their time off right away and then quit the practice without even working. That would be pretty shady though, and if your talent acquisition and onboarding processes are strong, you'll have already filtered out these risky hires. You can also mitigate this risk with a use-it-or-lose-it policy — but only if it's legally permissible in your state.

Prorating

Most commonly, employers choose to prorate PTO accrual throughout the year, based on the number of hours an employee works. This ensures that PTO is earned over time and remains tied to the employee's actual work.

However, prorated PTO policies require more math and you'll have to keep good records of your employees' attendance and clock-ins. The other con is that if something comes up (like one of those pesky sick days) and your employee has no PTO to spend, they'll either have a negative balance or be unable to take off the time they need. This is especially for new hires. You might be surprised how often brand-new employees have emergencies come up.

Use-It-or-Lose-It

Whether you choose a calendar or anniversary year, you may be able to implement a use-it-or-lose-it system. This is exactly what it sounds like — employees who accrue PTO will be required to use it within their year or else forfeit it. This prevents PTO hoarding and can help reduce burnout for those workhorses who never take an opportunity to rest.

If you're in a state where PTO payout isn't mandatory upon separation, employees who leave with PTO in the bank would fall into the "lose it" category.

This approach definitely simplifies administrative processes, but it can be tricky if not clearly outlined in the employment contract. Be aware that not all states will allow this policy at all. California, Colorado, Montana, and Nebraska consider PTO earned wages, which means you cannot take it away.

Rolling PTO (Carryover)

Don't like the idea of use-it-or-lose-it or can't offer that arrangement in your state? Rolling PTO or carryover allows employees to keep some or all of their unused PTO into the next year. This is a good middle ground between lump-sum and prorated setups because it gives your employees more flexibility to save up for those long vacations.

Carryover helps reduce last-minute time off requests at the end of the year, but if you're not careful, employees can rack up a whole lot of PTO this way. In this case, you may want to apply a cap or limit to the total amount of PTO employees can carry.

Unlimited PTO

One of the most attractive employee perks is so-called unlimited PTO.

In theory, this would be the flexibility for employees to take a day off whenever, however, whenever they need, and it wouldn't count against them. They wouldn't have to scrape together enough days to cover their vacation plans, worry about missing events, or struggle to find time to go to the doctor. And it'd be great for you, too, because you wouldn't have to worry about tallying up hours, paying out at the end of the employment contract, or hitting your state's quota. It's all bundled together into one unlimited package.



In practice, it's more complicated than that. Employees still need approval from their supervisor. Office politics could keep overachievers and shy people from getting the rest they sorely need — while others take “unlimited” too literally. With poor management, unlimited PTO could be distributed unevenly, which could even lead to discrimination claims.

There are definite pros and cons here, but if you have strong management who can keep it all fair and organized, this could be a good solution — especially if you're in one of those states with complicated PTO laws.

Pros and Cons of PTO Policies

	Pros for employers	Cons for employers	Pros for employees	Cons for employees
Lump-Sum	Low administrative burden and can be used as a performance incentive.	Employees may use all their PTO and then leave. Could create year-end staffing shortages	Employees know exactly how much PTO they have available	Employees could run out of PTO early in the year with no flexibility for unexpected needs
Front-Loading	Attractive hiring perk and easy for admins to measure	Financial liability if new hires take all their PTO early and then quit	No waiting period and immediate access to PTO	Can be complicated if the employee quits
Prorating	Ties PTO to real hours worked and prevents employees from taking time off too soon	Requires careful tracking and can lead to negative balances	PTO accrues as work is completed, so there's always a steady flow of time off	Employees (especially new hires) may not have access to enough PTO when they need it most
Use-It-Or-Lose-It	Prevents major PTO liabilities and encourages employees to take a break	Not legal in California, Colorado, Montana, or Nebraska. Can cause a rush of year-end requests	Encourages regular time off and helps prevent burnout	Employees may feel pressured to take time off at inconvenient times
Rolling PTO (Carryover)	Helps with retention and reduces year-end PTO rushes	Employees may be able to "hoard" PTO and take extremely long periods of time off	Flexible enough to save up time for longer vacations or time off	May be limited by caps or expiration dates
Unlimited	No financial liability for PTO payouts. Can be an attractive hiring perk	Unequal distribution could run the risk of discrimination claims. Employees may take too much or too little time off	Employees never have to worry about their PTO balances so they can always deal with the unexpected	Unclear expectations can lead employees to take too much or too little time off

PTO Best Practices for *Your* Practice

You'll need to establish PTO policies that are compliant with employment laws and support your practice — both logistically and to keep employee satisfaction high. It's a lot to take in, but you can find the balance between offering a competitive benefits package and running your practice efficiently.

Should you offer combined PTO or separate categories?

One of the first decisions you'll make is whether to keep your sick leave and vacation time separate or consolidate them into a single, combined PTO policy.

(If you offer unlimited PTO, this whole thing is a moot point.)

Separate Categories

The traditional model separates sick leave from vacation and/or PTO days. This allows employees to take time off for specific purposes. They won't have to cut vacations short or save time in case they get sick. If you're in a PTO payout state, separate policies can keep costs under control when employees leave.

But you'll really have to keep track of when and why employees are taking time off. Be careful not to pry into their medical or personal business when asking for reasons for the absence. Also, you'll have to monitor the reasons and make sure employees understand the difference between sick days, vacation days, and general PTO.

Combined PTO

Combined PTO is much easier to manage. If they need a personal day for whatever reason, they can just call it PTO and be done with it. You won't get those fake-cough phone calls where employees use a sick day instead of their precious vacation time.

On the flip side, combined PTO policies mean employees might use all their time off on that once-in-a-lifetime trip, then be all but forced to come into work with whatever germs they picked up on vacation. Not good for anyone. This could also be the more expensive option if you're in a PTO payout state.

There's no right or wrong here. The decision depends on your practice's size, budget, management style, and the kind of work culture you want to foster. Ultimately, flexibility is going to be key to having a staff of happy, healthy, not-burned-out employees.

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Tiered PTO vs. Flat Amounts of PTO

[34% of healthcare practice owners](#) are worried about staffing shortages and retention. If you are too, rewarding long-term employees with more PTO can be an effective way to keep great talent on the payroll.

In the tiered PTO system, new hires start with a lower amount of PTO, but after a certain amount of time, they'll be able to earn more. If you can keep track of everyone's work anniversaries, this is a great way to show your appreciation for employees who stay with you longer.

A flat amount of PTO gives everyone the same amount of time off, no matter how long they've been with you. It's straightforward, easy to manage, and fair across the board. If you have high turnover or a very small practice, this may be the way to go. On the other hand, you won't be offering an incentive for employees who stick it out, so they may feel less motivated to stay.

Resolving Time-Off Conflicts

At some point, you're going to face a time-off conflict. Maybe two employees want the same day off or this is the year everyone's booked a summer vacation. It happens. A first-come, first-served approach works, but it's not the only option.

Some practices use seniority or a rotating system to make sure everyone gets a turn at the front of the line. Just make sure you've added these details to your employee handbook and your employees understand how decisions are made. The trick is transparency. Clear communication will go a long way to preventing frustration and misaligned staffing.

Mandatory PTO and Office Closures

In health and dentistry, it's go go go. You and your employees work extremely hard, and even though you deserve a break, you might not take it.

Some employers have started implementing mandatory PTO during office closures to make sure teams get the rest they need. If it's the holiday season, it only makes sense to send people home to their families for a week or two. Scheduled downtime can help reduce burnout, improve morale, and make sure employees are actually using their benefits and not hoarding PTO. In some cases, this is exactly the break your employees need. If you have a use-it-or-lose-it policy, mandatory PTO can avoid year-end chaos, too.

But for those who've already used their PTO, this can negate their future plans. If they had a vacation booked six months from now — whoops, there goes the PTO they set aside for it. New hires might start their employment with a negative PTO balance and senior staff members might feel micromanaged.

What if your office closes for another reason? Acts of nature or broken medical equipment will throw off your schedule. If you have a very small practice, a family emergency can shut your doors for weeks. Does this mean your employees must use their PTO? Or will you offer unpaid leave until the issue is resolved?

Mandatory PTO — whether you plan it or not — is one of those things that needs to be outlined clearly. Set expectations early and listen to what your employees are saying in response.

How to Stay Competitive in This Job Market

To stay competitive in today's job market, health and dental practice owners need to recognize that PTO is more than a benefit. It's expected. Top talent has choice, and offering above-average PTO, flexible scheduling, or extra perks like mental health days or PTO for volunteering can set your practice apart.

Candidates aren't necessarily looking for one particular PTO policy or arrangement. They want you to show that you're prioritizing work-life balance. Burnout is high in this industry, and a well-structured PTO policy shows employees they're valued, making them more likely to stay long-term.

Here's What Other Health and Dental Practice Owners are Doing

Aside from complying with state and local laws regarding PTO and sick leave, there are some trends. Even though [around half](#) of all employees don't take all their PTO, they want and expect these benefits as part of their package.

- [96%](#) of all employers now offer paid time off.
- [68%](#) of employers opt for combined PTO policies.
- [7%](#) of employers offer unlimited PTO (and they usually take 16 days per year).
- [1 in 5 U.S. workers](#) would flat-out decline a job offer if it didn't include PTO as a benefit.

In the health and dental industries, too, offering PTO is standard.

- [84%](#) of full and part-time employees who work in healthcare get paid vacation.
- [82%](#) of health, dental, veterinary, and chiropractic practice owners offer vacation time and sick leave to their hourly workers. Even more offer paid holidays.
- [73%](#) of people working in the health and dental industries have sick leave, but the amount varies based on the kind of work they do.

The amount of paid time off varies.

- In Illinois, Maine, and Nevada, everyone gets at least 40 hours (5 days) of combined PTO per year.
- Workers in Arizona, California, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, and Washington get at least 40 hours (5 days) of sick leave per year. Workers in Colorado and New Mexico get more.
- Across the board, workers with combined PTO setups take home between [14 – 23 days](#).
- Workers who get vacation/PTO separate from sick leave earn between [8 – 17 days](#) of vacation.

Connecting PTO to Your Office Systems Using HR for Health

Your employee handbook serves a lot of purposes. It sets up expectations for how employees should work and act at your practice, it answers most of your employees' FAQs, it stores your policies to clear up confusion, and it's your armor against common lawsuits.

You need an employee handbook, and for PTO, this is your place to spell out the policies you've set in place.

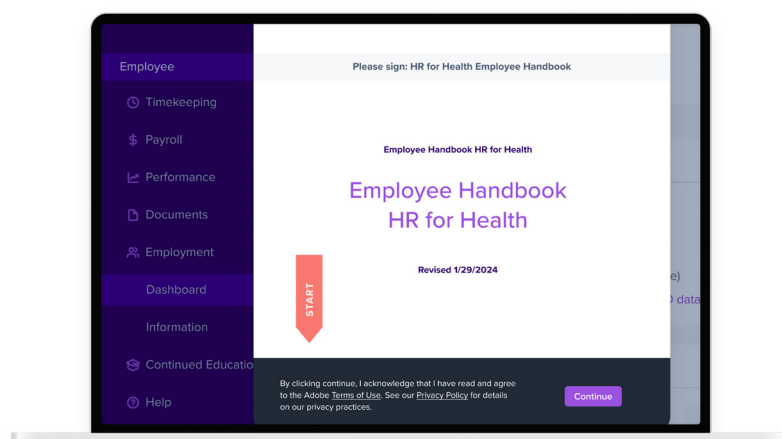
1. Specify the PTO arrangements you've chosen. Mention whether it's a lump-sum, prorated, or unlimited setup. If it carries over, say so. If you have a cap, use-it-or-lose-it policy, or other limitations, clearly define them. Explain whether you measure years by the calendar or by work anniversaries.
2. Describe the differences between PTO, vacation, and sick leave if it's relevant to your policies.
3. Mention relevant laws regarding PTO and sick leave. This will make it crystal clear that you're compliant with local, state, and federal laws and help prevent claims to the contrary.
4. If you offer tiered PTO, outline the system you're using and how employees can earn more time.
5. Describe the time frames for requesting time off, how you handle conflicts, any rules you have in place about denials, etc.
6. If you have special circumstances, like mandatory time off or plans for practice emergencies, define them.
7. Finally, say what happens to PTO when employees leave. We don't want to think about this part, but it's important to get ahead of these questions.

When you include all this info in your handbook, there's no confusion. No surprises. Everybody understands the rules and how to play fair.

PTO policies made simple

Your PTO policy needs to be clear, legally compliant, and easy for employees to follow. With HR for Health's Employee Handbook Generator, you can customize and update your PTO policies effortlessly—so you're always compliant.

Create your handbook now



Using PTO with Time Clocks and Tracking Systems

So now you've got your policy spelled out. You've picked the arrangements that make the most sense to your practice, your employees, your management style, and your workplace culture. Woo!

Not done yet.

Now you need a [time clock and time-tracking system](#) that keeps it organized. With the right system — which would be HR for Health, of course — employees can review and request their PTO with a click, then you can compare schedules, review requests, and approve or deny with ease. You'll understand exactly which category of PTO your employees need, track their accruals, and make sure everything is organized. All the numbers are automatically up to date. No sticky notes required.

Integrated PTO and time tracking — All in one place

With HR for Health, employees can clock in, request PTO, and track their balances in the same system—eliminating the need for multiple tools and manual tracking.

[Learn more about HR for Health](#)



Leave the heavy lifting to HR for Health

Paid time off is technically a benefit, but it's more than that.

It's a way to attract great talent, support your employees' work-life balance, and give them the rest they need so they can be happier, healthier, and more productive. Your employees will have the energy to bring their best selves to work and provide the quality care your patients need.

There's a lot to consider when setting up PTO policies, true, but it's worth it. After all that, you deserve a vacation.

Get a demo of HR for Health to see how we'll give you your free time back.

Get in touch with us

