

News

PHANTHAVONG IN 'LAW360' AS COVID LAW'S WANING MANDATES PUT SPOTLIGHT ON FMLA

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Chicago Counsel Christy Phanthavong was quoted Feb. 23 by *Law360* concerning the need for employers to become re-familiarized with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) given the expiration of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act's now-voluntary worker leave provisions, set to expire in March. Phanthavong discussed how employers can appoint a human resources employee or team of HR professionals to serve as experts in both the company's leave policy and the relevant state, local and federal leave laws. "Identify someone in human resources or in benefits who is tasked with understanding the various leave laws and the employer's own policies and can be knowledgeable on those issues, so they can ask the right questions of employees and implement the policies fairly and in compliance with the law," Phanthavong said. Businesses also should evaluate each leave request and be careful not to designate all COVID-related leave as FMLA leave when it doesn't actually qualify under the statute, Phanthavong told *Law360*. "It can backfire if time is counted against an employee's FMLA entitlement when it's not actually FMLA leave," she said.

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