Global Legislative Update

July/August 2026

Law & Policy Group
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In this document

Mercer's *Global Legislative Update* covers legal developments affecting retirement, health, executive rewards, talent, diversity and inclusion, and other HR programs that affect local and/or expatriate employees. Links to developments with upcoming effective dates covered in past updates are also included to remind employers of impending deadlines. These icons indicate whether employer action is required:

Employer action required **Potential implications for employers** **Developments to monitor**

Please note: Mercer is not a law firm and therefore cannot provide legal advice. Please consult legal counsel before taking any actions based on the commentary and recommendations in this report.

Section 1

Highlights

Global	
International Labour Organization	Global labor standard on rights of platform/gig workers adopted
Artificial Intelligence	Global employer resources
Minimum wage rates	Global employer resources
Remote working	Global employer resources
Reproductive rights	Global employer resources post–*Dobbs* ruling
Right to disconnect	Global employer resources
Americas	
Bermuda	Parental leave to parents adopting a child expanded
Canada	Base Canada Pension Plan rate to decrease in 2027 Unpaid leave for illness and injury recovery expanded in New Brunswick Unpaid attachment leave for adoption and surrogacy introduced in Manitoba Sick leave note requirements to change in Manitoba Pension Benefits Act amended in Newfoundland
Colombia	Certain labor law provisions take effect Regulation on provision of breastfeeding spaces take effect
Costa Rica	Time off for breastfeeding at workplace expanded
Jamaica	Minimum wage increased
United States	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission rescinds longstanding affirmative action guidance Federal judge strikes down $100,00 surcharge on H-1B petitions Mercer projects 2027 transportation and health flexible spending arrangement limits

Americas (continued)	
United States	Guidance issued on SECURE 2.0's long-term care distributions Equal Employment Opportunity Commission releases draft strategic plan for comment Excepted fertility benefit proposed Proposed overhaul of public company filer statuses would reduce executive pay disclosure Financial Accounting Standards Board proposes accounting changes for some cash balance plans Employers can contribute to Trump accounts Roundup: Employer resources on tax deduction for overtime pay Roundup: Employer resources on H-1B reforms Roundup: 2025 state paid family and medical leave contributions and benefits Domestic partner benefits remain popular, but present challenges Roundup: State accrued paid leave mandates Beyond COBRA: State laws add complexity to continuation coverage Group fixed-indemnity plans pose legal and tax issues User's guide to SECURE 2.0 Transportation plans offer valued benefits, but pose compliance issues Roundup: Employer resources on the changing landscape of DEI Roundup: Employer resources on noncompete restrictions Some states require group health plan sponsor reporting Resources for tracking state and local retirement initiatives Roundup: Employer resources on states' recent equal pay laws Roundup: Employer resources on states' recreational marijuana laws Roundup: Employer resources on minimum wage increases Roundup: Employer resources on hairstyle nondiscrimination laws Menopausal coverage law required in California New laws impact health plan costs in California Tax increase on managed care organizations in California becomes law Prior authorization report deadline passes in California Minimum compensation ordinance rates issued in San Francisco, California Health Care Accountability Ordinance standards updated for 2027 in San Francisco, California

Americas (continued)	
United States	Health Care Accountability Ordinance rates take effect in San Francisco, California Food and Drug Administration allows Colorado to import prescription drugs Prescription utilization review for fully insured plans restricted in Colorado Insured plans must apply third-party financial assistance to cost sharing for prescription drugs in Colorado Portable benefits accounts for nonemployees enacted in Georgia Unpaid family leave law changed to include qualifying military exigencies in Hawaii How insurance laws apply to HSA qualifying high-deductible health plans in Iowa clarified Portable benefit plan for independent contractors established in Kansas Law clarifies how insurance mandates apply to HSA-qualifying high-deductible health plans in Kentucky Paid family leave insurance law enacted in Louisiana Prior authorization law enacted in Louisiana Louisiana law covers pharmacy benefit manager's manufacturer rebates, fees, care standards and transparency Law sets minimum standards for pharmacy benefit manager reimbursements of pharmacies in Louisiana Portable benefit accounts for independent workers established in Louisiana Pay transparency law soon to take effect in Maine Mandated preventive services law enacted in Maryland Employer registration for paid family medical leave program begins in Maryland Employer healthcare assistance contribution required in New Jersey Telehealth parity extended in New Jersey Job protection for leaves expanded in New Jersey Immunization law insurance provisions take effect in New Mexico Benefit and leave laws vary in Puerto Rico Temporary disability insurance benefit maximums increased in Rhode Island Vaccine law enacted in Rhode Island Wellness vendor law enacted in South Carolina Prior authorization law enacted in South Dakota Law clarifies when noncompetes are reasonable and bans them for low-wage employees in Tennessee Department of Insurance issues AI guidance in Texas Wage transparency, salary history ban takes effect in Virginia Prior authorization law takes effect in Virginia Prior authorization insurance law takes effect in Wyoming

Americas (continued)	
United States	Portable benefit accounts for nonemployees adopted in Wyoming
Uruguay	Minimum wage increased
Asia Pacific	
Australia	Regulator urges further progress on superannuation death benefit claims Regulator outlines approach to enforcing advertising ban during employee onboarding Regulator urges consideration of geopolitical risks Regulator’s review of superannuation platform trustees issued Regulators announce simplification of financial accountability regime changes Division 296 regulations take effect Consultation on scams prevention framework code and rules issued Capital gains tax and negative gearing changes enacted Consultation on identifying issues in whistleblower frameworks Consultation on updated prudential governance framework Superannuation bills take effect
China	Employment rights of older workers expanded Revised medical insurance reimbursement arrangements introduced in Shanghai
Hong Kong	General holidays for 2027 published
India	Revised social security schemes announced
Malaysia	Tax incentive for certain employers who implement flexible work arrangements announced Expatriate permit changes to boost local employment rate introduced
Singapore	New conditions for health plan riders introduced Local Qualifying salary increased Retirement and re-employment age increased
South Korea	Paternity and child care leave to expand
Taiwan	Protections against workplace bullying enacted
Vietnam	Maternity, paternity leaves to increase

Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA)	
European Union	Provisional agreement on a regulation to enable e-declarations for posted workers reached Roundup: Employer resources on EU's pay transparency directive Consultation on guidelines for corporate sustainability due diligence directive
Belgium	Temporary wage indexation introduced in two phases
France	Physicians must specify employees sick leave duration Issuance of sick leave certificates by teleconsultation restricted Nurses' scope of practice expanded New paid birth leave introduced
Germany	Pension reform recommendations published
Greece	Application of Digital Work Card to more industry sectors expanded
Ireland	Employees allowed to work beyond contractual age
Italy	Fair wage framework introduced Termination Indemnity rules revised to increase employees' pension participation
Netherlands	Senate approves pension lump sum legislation
Oman	Social protection for foreign employees expanded
Romania	Minimum wage increased
United Kingdom	Government to gradually introduce real-time reporting of benefits-in-kind New surplus flexibility for defined benefit schemes proposed
Uzbekistan	Employers no longer pay maternity and sick benefits

Section 2

Global

International Labour Organization (new)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Career** **Global labor standard on rights of platform/gig workers adopted** The International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted Convention 193 Concerning Decent Work in the Platform Economy on June 12, 2026, the first global labor standard addressing platform/gig workers and algorithmic management. Highlights include: • It applies to all digital labor platforms and extends core protections to platform workers regardless of their contractual classification, while not obliging states to reclassify workers as employees where domestic law does not already provide that status. • It requires governments to take measures to formalize platform work (including registering self-employed workers), ensure full and timely payment in line with minimum-wage rules, reimburse work-related expenses, and provide access to social security on terms no less favorable than for comparable workers. • It requires that governments must prevent workplace accidents, occupational disease, violence, and harassment (including online abuse), and ensure the correct worker classification based on the true nature of the work. • It dictates that platforms must disclose use of automated systems affecting workers and provide written explanations and human review for decisions on pay, suspension, deactivation, or termination. Governments must submit the Convention to competent authorities for ratification within 12 months. For context, the United States and New Zealand voted against, while the United Kingdom and India abstained in the ILO vote.
Resources	Convention No. 193: Convention concerning decent work in the platform economy, 2026 (ILO, June 15, 2026)

Artificial Intelligence	
Status	⚠ **Ongoing initiatives**
Development	**Career** **Roundup: Global employer resources on artificial intelligence** Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become more of a permanent feature of the workplace for many employees and employers around the world and poses numerous challenges and considerations as it reshapes work. To help employers consider the issues associated with AI, the roundup cited below provides links to general information about ongoing legislative and governance initiatives and trends. Sources include Marsh, organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles, and viewpoints.
Resources	Roundup, regularly updated
Minimum wage	
Status	⚠ **Ongoing initiatives**
Development	**Career** **Roundup: Global employer resources on minimum wage increases** To help multinational employers address the different minimum wage rates around the world, the roundup cited below provides links to resources from organizations, government websites, third-party resources, news articles, and viewpoints.
Resources	Roundup, regularly updated
Remote working	
Status	⚠ **Ongoing initiatives**
Development	**Career — Health — Wealth** **Roundup: Countries address remote-working issues** Remote working has become more of a permanent feature for many employees and employers after various countries introduced COVID-19 measures. Remote working poses challenges and considerations for employers devising or adjusting policies. Issues to consider include the definition of remote work, eligibility criteria, hybrid working arrangements, employee engagement and performance, cybersecurity, health and safety, the right to disconnect, the impact of employees relocating to a different country or state, and the post-pandemic return to the workplace. Several jurisdictions have introduced remote-working legislation that clarifies post-pandemic employer and employee requirements, and others are expected to follow suit. To help employers consider the issues associated with remote working, the roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles, and viewpoints.
Resources	Roundup, regularly updated

Reproductive rights	
Status	**Ongoing initiatives**
Development	**Health** **Roundup: Global employer resources on reproductive rights post-Dobbs ruling** In June 2022, the US Supreme Court's *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision overturned *Roe v. Wade*, finding no federal constitutional right to abortion and allowing states to regulate and ban abortions at all stages of pregnancy. To provide multinational employers some information on countries' positions on reproductive rights and the varying employee health benefit plan issues involved, the roundup cited below provides links to organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles, and viewpoints.
Resources	Roundup, regularly updated

Right to disconnect	
Status	**Ongoing initiatives**
Development	**Career** **Roundup: Right to disconnect around the world** In recent years, several countries have enacted legislation requiring employers to allow employees the "right to disconnect" — or to "switch off" from work-related electronic communications (such as emails) outside of their normal working hours. To help employers consider the issues associated with the right to disconnect, this roundup provides links to general information about countries' legislative/regulatory governance initiatives and trends. Sources include organizations, government websites, third-party analysis news articles, and viewpoints.
Resources	Roundup, regularly updated

Section 3

Americas

Bermuda (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Career — Health** **Parental leave to parents adopting a child expanded** Effective June 1, 2026, Bermuda introduced a new right for employees to take parental leave when they adopt or become the legal guardian of a young child living in their household. The new entitlement is included in the Bermuda Employment Amendment Act 2026 and broadly aligns adoptive and guardian leave rights with existing maternity and paternity leave rules (13 weeks for the mother and five days for the father). Highlights of the Act include: • Eligible children must be younger than 24 months on the date of the relevant court order concerning their placement (or the expected date of placement) into the employee's household. Parental leave must be taken within 14 weeks of the court order being made. • Employees who have completed one year of continuous employment with their employer by the date of the child's placement or expected placement are entitled to paid parental leave; employees with less than one year's service are entitled to unpaid parental leave. • Employees must submit a written application to their employer at least four weeks before the intended leave start date. The notification must state the intended start and end dates and include a copy of the relevant court order. • Employees returning from parental leave are entitled to the same position they held before the leave, or to a comparable position with no less favorable wages, benefits and seniority if their original role no longer exists.
Resources	The Employment Amendment Act ensures parental leave protections for adoptive parents and legal guardians (Government, March 12, 2026)

Brazil (previously covered, with an upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Career — Health** • Paid paternity leave expanded — key date: January 1, 2027 **Career** • Payroll tax to increase — key date: January 1, 2027

Canada (new)	
Status	**Effective January 1, 2027**
Development	**Wealth** **Base Canada Pension Plan contribution rate to decrease** On January 1, 2027, the total contribution rate to the Base Canada Pension Plan (CPP) will decrease to 9.5%, down from 9.9%, resulting in a 4.75% rate each for employers and workers. The reduction is included in the federal government's Spring Economic Update delivered on April 28, 2026. Contribution rates to the Additional CPP are unaffected by this change. Jointly managed by the federal and provincial governments outside Quebec, the CPP's contribution reduction was previously approved by these governments as part of a triennial review of the CPP. The reduced contribution rate to the Base CPP remains higher than the minimum long-term contribution rates of 9.21% for years 2028 to 2033 and 9.19% thereafter that were reported in the CPP Actuarial Report. Organizations should take this change into account when budgeting for 2027, including planning for adjustments to payroll systems for their employees outside Quebec.
Resources	Bill C-30 (Legislature, June 18, 2026)

Canada — New Brunswick (new)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Career — Health** **Unpaid leave for illness and injury recovery expanded** Effective June 12, 2026, New Brunswick has introduced up to 27 weeks of unpaid leave for illness and injury recovery calculated over a 52-week period. The measures are included in the amended Employment Standards Act. Previously, employees were allowed up to five days of job-protected leave for illness or injury. Other provinces and federally regulated workplaces offer either 26 or 27 weeks of protected leave for illness and recovery.
Resources	Bill 26 (Legislature, March 18, 2026)

Canada — Manitoba (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Career — Health** **Unpaid attachment leave for adoption and surrogacy introduced** Effective June 1, 2026, Bill 10 amends Manitoba's Employment Standards Code to allow up to 16 weeks of unpaid "attachment leave" for employees following the placement of a child for adoption or the birth of a child through surrogacy. Highlights of the measures include: • Employees must have worked for the same employer for at least seven consecutive months. • Up to 16 weeks of unpaid attachment leave must be taken as one continuous period. Leave may begin as early as six weeks before the estimated or actual placement date and must end no later than 16 weeks after placement. • If an employee chooses to take parental leave, it must start immediately after attachment leave ends. • If two or more children are placed through adoption or surrogacy in the same week, the employee is entitled to only one period of attachment leave. • Employees should provide at least four weeks of notice before the leave starts, unless shorter notice is required by the circumstances. Early termination of the leave by the employee is allowed subject to two weeks of notice or one pay period. • Attachment leave has the same rights and protections as other statutory leaves, including the right to return to the same job or a comparable job with the same or more pay and benefits.
Resources	kristin.smith@mercer.com Bill 10 (Legislature)

Canada — Manitoba (new)	
Status	⚠ **Beginning October 1, 2026**
Development	**Career — Health** **Sick leave note requirements to change** Beginning October 1, 2026, Bill 11 will amend Manitoba's Employment Standards Code and limit when employers may require medical sick notes. Highlights include: • Employers may only request a sick note if the absence lasts more than one week, or the employee has been absent from work due to illness or injury on more than 10 schedule workdays in the same calendar year. A workday includes both partial and full days. • The list of acceptable providers of sick notes is expanded to require employers to accept sick notes from licensed health professionals outside Manitoba when the employee received care there, for example a physician, physician assistant or clinical assistant; a registered nurse, nurse practitioner or registered psychiatric nurse; a psychologist; or a midwife. • Employers must reimburse employees for the cost of sick notes, subject to specified submission and payment timelines. These changes bring Manitoba in line with similar recent legislative reforms elsewhere in Canada.
Resources	Bill 11 (Legislature, June 1, 2026)

Canada — Newfoundland (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Wealth** **Pension Benefits Act amended** Bill 6 An Act to Amend the Pensions Benefit Act, 1997 received Royal Assent and took effect on June 2, 2026. The bill: • Adds definitions of "solvency assets" and "solvency ratio" • Authorizes transfers of assets from a registered pension plan to a pension plan that is not registered in the province, subject to certain conditions.
Resources	Bill 6 (Legislature, June 2, 2026)

Canada (previously covered, with an upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Career — Health** • "Right-to-disconnect" established for employees — key date: Expected to take effect later in 2026 **Career** • Equal pay regulations for federally regulated employers published — key date: October 26, 2026 **Health** • Significant public and private healthcare reforms introduced in Alberta — key date: To be implemented in stages throughout 2026 and 2027 **Wealth** • Pension super priority federal legislation enacted — key date: April 27, 2027

Colombia (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Career** **Certain labor law changes take effect** Changes to Colombia's labor laws in Law 2466 of 2025 generally took effect in July 2025 and expand employees' protections; however, a few provisions became effective on July 1, 2026. They are: • Effective July 1, 2025, employers must inform their employees about the start of disciplinary proceedings, allow the employees concerned to access the evidence and provide five days for them to prepare their defense. Employers must incorporate the new disciplinary procedures into their work policies by July 2026. • Employers must pay a 90% surcharge to employees who work on their mandatory rest day and it will increase to 100% on July 1, 2027. Employers and employees can agree for the weekly rest day to be scheduled on any day. • Companies with 100 or more employees must hire two people with disabilities for every 100 employees — up to 500 employees. After 500 employees, the quota is one disabled person for every 100 employees.
Resources	Law 2466 of 2025 (Spanish) (Official Journal, June 25, 2025)

Colombia (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Career — Health** **Regulation on provision of breastfeeding spaces take effect** Effective July 2, 2026, employers must provide a designated space in their workplace to enable women to breastfeed. The measures are included in Executive Decree No. 44943-MTSS-S that repeals the previous decree. The designated space must be a room, booth or other area that meets minimum hygiene, safety, privacy, and accessibility requirements — including refrigeration, wash facilities, seating, ventilation and lighting, etc. Restrooms, bathrooms, storage rooms or similar areas are not acceptable spaces. Employers will be fined for noncompliance (eight to 23 times base salaries) and will have to implement other corrective measures imposed by the Ministry of Health.
Resources	Executive Decree No. 44943-MTSS-S (Spanish) (Government, July 14, 2025)

Colombia (previously covered, with an upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Wealth** • Pension reforms issued — key date: Postponed from July 1, 2025, pending judicial decision

Costa Rica (new)

Status — **Currently effective**

Development

Career — Health

Time-off for breastfeeding at workplace expanded

Effective April 23, 2026, Costa Rica enacted Law 10895 to Protect, Promote and Support Breastfeeding. The law expands on the one hour per day paid breastfeeding breaks; allows periodic extensions after one year while breastfeeding continues; requires employer-provided hygienic lactation facilities; and adds specific provisions for multiple births, adoptive mothers, and overtime work. Employers should review and update workplace policies, rostering and facilities immediately to ensure compliance. Highlights include:

- The existing one-year entitlement to paid breastfeeding time at work may now be extended every three months for as long as the child is breastfed, on presentation of a medical certificate (covering direct, delayed, mixed breastfeeding, and relactation).
- Break scheduling is flexible by mutual agreement (15 minutes every two hours; two 30-minute breaks per day; arriving one hour late or leaving one hour early).
- Adoptive mothers are entitled to the same one hour per day of time-off to facilitate lactation, subject to a medical certificate.
- For multiple births, mothers are entitled to one additional hour per day per baby.
- Breastfeeding employees who work overtime must receive an extra 15 minutes of break time for every three hours of overtime.
- Employers must provide an additional paid 25-minute period for every three hours worked for expressing breast milk; this time cannot be accumulated to shorten the workday or used for other purposes.

Employers must provide a safe, hygienic, and suitable space for breastfeeding, expressing and storing breast milk; the space must be approved by the Occupational Safety and Health Office.

Resources — Law 10895 to Protect, Promote and Support Breastfeeding (Spanish) (Government, April 27, 2026)

El Salvador (previously covered, with an upcoming effective date)

Development

Career

- Annual bonus payments mandated — key date: January 1, 2027

Honduras (previously covered, with an upcoming effective date)

Development

Career

- Minimum wage increased — key date: January 1, 2027

Jamaica (new)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Career** **Minimum wage increased** On July 1, 2026, the weekly minimum wage increased to JM$17,000 per 40-hour week, up from JM$16,000, per 40-hour week.
Resources	Minimum wage moves to $17,000 on July 1 (Government, March 24, 2026)
Mexico (previously covered, with an upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Career** • Maximum working week to be gradually reduced — key date: Beginning in 2027
Panama (previously covered, with an upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Wealth** • Employer social security contributions increased — key date: March 1, 2027
Peru (previously covered, with an upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Career — Wealth** • Pension system modernization law issued — key dates: 2027 and 2028 • Regulations to support pension system reform issued — key date: starting in June 2027
United States (US) (new)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Career** **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission rescinds longstanding affirmative action guidance** On June 29, 2026, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) voted to rescind longstanding affirmative action guidelines and the related compliance manual. The EEOC found that the guidelines "ran afoul of the text of Title VII and contradicted Supreme Court case law that has developed over the four decades since the Affirmative Guidelines were issued."
Resources	EEOC votes to rescind affirmative action interpretive guidelines and related compliance manual (EEOC, June 30, 2026) and Roundup: Employer resources on the changing landscape of DEI (Mercer, regularly updated)

US (new)	
Status	Currently effective
Development	**Career** **Federal judge strikes down $100,00 surcharge on H-1B petitions** On June 8, 2026, a federal judge struck down the $100,000 surcharge on H-1B visa petitions, ruling that it was an unauthorized tax that violated the Administrative Procedure Act and the Constitution. Twenty states had sued to block the fee. The Trump administration appealed the decision and successfully requested an emergency stay from the First Circuit Court of Appeals, which temporarily paused the lower court's decision. As background, on September 19, 2025, President Trump signed a proclamation to restrict the entry into the US of H-1B alien workers in specialty occupations, requiring a $100,000 payment to accompany or supplement H-1B visa petitions for new applications. Since then, implementation of the proclamation has caused confusion among employers and H-1B holders.
Resources	Roundup: Employer resources on H-1B reforms (Mercer, regularly updated)

US (new)	
Status	Proposal
Development	**Career** **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission releases draft strategic plan for comment** On July 1, 2026, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) released a draft strategic plan for fiscal years 2026-2030 that is open for comment until July 19, 2026. The EEOC Chair says the plan "provides a roadmap for advancing the EEOC's mission and reflects the agency's commitment to the evenhanded, merit-based enforcement of our nation's federal civil rights laws."
Resources	EEOC votes to release updated draft strategic plan for public input (EEOC, July 1, 2026) and EEOC strategic plan 2026-2-30 (Government, July 1, 2026)

US (new)	
Status	⚠ **Effective January 1, 2027**
Development	**Health** **Mercer projects 2027 transportation and health flexible spending arrangement limits** Mercer projects the 2027 limits for qualified transportation (parking and transit) benefits and health flexible spending arrangements (FSAs) will increase from 2026 levels. These unofficial 2027 limits are determined using the Internal Revenue Code (IRC)'s cost-of-living adjustment methods, the Chained Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (C-CPI-U) values through June, and Mercer's projected C-CPI-U for July and August. While adoption assistance program limits generally use the same indexing formula, they can't be reliably projected due to the small rounding threshold. IRS usually announces the official limits for these benefits — along with long-term care limits (based on the medical component of the August C-CPI-U) — for the coming year in October or November.
Resources	GRIST, June 11, 2026 margaret.berger@mercer.com, james.chaken@mercer.com, and dorian.smith@mercer.com

US (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Wealth** **Guidance issued on SECURE 2.0's long-term care distributions** The SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022 allows 401(k), 403(a) annuity, 403(b), and governmental 457(b) plans to offer qualified long-term care distributions — without early-withdrawal penalties — to pay for long-term care insurance premiums for employees and their spouses. Recently-issued IRS Notice 2026-33 provides guidance on these distributions and extends the SECURE 2.0 plan amendment deadline for adding them to nongovernmental and noncollectively bargained plans. The GRIST cited below summarizes the statutory provisions on qualified long-term care distributions and notes where Notice 2026-33 provides clarifying guidance for sponsors, plan administrators, and insurers.
Resources	brian.kearney@mercer.com; matthew.calloway@mercer.com; and margaret.berger@mercer.com GRIST, June 11, 2026

US	
Status	**Proposal**
Development	**Health** **Excepted fertility benefit proposed** Regulators released proposed rules that if finalized, would add a new category of "limited excepted benefit" for fertility benefits. Under the proposal, employers could offer stand-alone fertility benefits (outside of their medical plan) similar to limited scope dental and vision benefits, either through self-funded or insured programs. Comments were due by July 13, 2026. Regulators intend for final rules to apply for the first plan year beginning on or after January 1, 2027. Employers may want to revisit their fertility solutions if the rules are finalized. Notably, the proposal doesn't require employers to provide fertility coverage or define essential health benefits to include fertility. Many large employers already cover fertility benefits under their medical plan, but many smaller employers do not. The proposal would expand the options for fertility benefits for all employers. Last year, President Trump signed an executive order intended to make fertility treatment more accessible and affordable, a priority of the White House. The options that employers already have for offering fertility benefits outside of their medical plans were revisited in FAQs explaining how existing excepted benefit rules might be used specifically to provide a standalone fertility benefit.
Resources	cheryl.hughes@mercer.com Excepted fertility benefits (Federal Register, May 13, 2026) and Delivering efficient and affordable IVF coverage to employees (Mercer, March 6, 2026)

US	
Status	**Comments are due by July 20, 2026**
Development	**Career** **Proposed overhaul of public company filer statuses would reduce executive pay disclosure** On May 19, 2026, as part of its efforts to simplify US public company reporting and disclosure requirements, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) proposed sweeping amendments to its public company reporting framework. Changes include significant reductions to required executive pay disclosure for most public companies. Only large accelerated filers (LAFs), defined as those with public float of $2 billion or more, would still be required to comply with the current rules. All other companies (approximately 80% of current public companies) and, for at least a five-year period after going public, newly public companies, would be categorized as nonaccelerated filers (NAFs). NAFs would be able to take advantage of scaled disclosure rules that currently apply only to emerging growth companies (EGCs) and smaller reporting companies (SRCs). A subcategory of small nonaccelerated filers with total assets of $35 million or less would receive additional accommodations. The article cited below summarizes how executive pay disclosure would be scaled for NAFs and SNFs. Highlights of the proposed amendments are discussed in the SEC's fact sheet. NAFs and SNFs will likely welcome the reduced compliance obligations and costs, and scaled disclosure could help the SEC achieve its stated goal of making it easier for companies to go and stay public. But the changes would also significantly reduce the information available for benchmarking pay and for investors making investment decisions. Comments on the proposal are due by July 20, 2026. The SEC will review the comments before issuing a final rule (which may differ from the proposal). During this period, companies weighing the pros and cons of going or staying public should factor in the reduced obligations and cost, and current filers should determine their status under the proposal and the potential impact on future pay disclosure and governance.
Resources	carol.silverman@mercer.com and amy.knieriem@mercer.com SEC's proposed overhaul of public company filer statuses would reduce executive pay disclosure for all new and most current filers (Mercer, May 26, 2026)

US (new)	
Status	**Comments are due by August 10, 2026**
Development	**Wealth** **Financial Accounting Standards Board proposes accounting changes for some cash balance plans** For the first time in 20 years, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) has suggested substantive — though limited — changes to the accounting framework for defined benefit (DB) plans. FASB's proposed Accounting Standards Update (ASU) is restricted to certain cash balance plans and would require them to use a discount rate equal to the plan's assumed interest crediting rate, aligning the plan's assets and liabilities. This would eliminate a significant source of friction for employers who sponsor (or are interested in sponsoring) these plans. Accounting for other DB plans would not change. The proposed ASU invites comment on all aspects of the proposal. In addition to questions on the proposal's clarity, usefulness, and operability, and other routine matters, FASB asks the following: • Should the changes be mandatory in all circumstances for in-scope market rate cash balance plans MRCBPs, or would using a different discount rate be appropriate in some situations? • Should the changes be applied to other types of cash balance plans that are economically similar to in-scope MRCBPs? If so, how should those plans be defined, and how common are they?
Resources	margaret.berger@mercer.com, bruce.cadenhead@mercer.com, and brian.kearney@mercer.com GRIST, July 1, 2026
US (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Wealth** **Employers can contribute to Trump accounts** Starting in July 2026, employers can voluntarily contribute to the Trump accounts of employees' dependent children. Created by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (Pub. L. No. 119-21), these accounts are a new kind of tax-preferred savings vehicle for individuals under 18. Employer contributions up to $2,500 per year are excludable from an employee's gross income if made pursuant to a program that meets certain conditions. This tax exclusion also applies to employer contributions to accounts of employees who are under 18.
Resources	matthew.calloway@mercer.com; rmargaret.berger@mercer.com; brian.kearney@mercer.com and dorian.smith@mercer.com GRIST, June 30, 2026

US	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Career** **Roundup: Employer resources on tax deduction for overtime pay** On July 4, 2025, President Trump signed the "One Big Beautiful Bill," which includes a federal income tax deduction on nonexempt workers' overtime pay covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act. The overtime tax deduction is currently scheduled to expire after 2028. To provide employers with some information about the deduction and the varying aspects and issues to consider, this roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles, and viewpoints.
Resources	Roundup: Employer resources on tax deduction for overtime, regularly updated

US	
Status	⚠ **Ongoing developments**
Development	**Career** **Roundup: Employer resources on H-1B reforms** On September 19, 2025, President Trump signed a proclamation to restrict the entry into the US of H-1B alien workers in specialty occupations, requiring a $100,000 payment to accompany or supplement H-1B visa petitions for new applications. Since then, implementation of the proclamation has caused confusion among employers and H-1B holders, and states have challenged the restrictions. To provide employers with some information about state-of-play of the H-1B visa requirements and the issues to consider, this roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles, and viewpoints. The aggregated content in each section is organized in reverse chronological order and is by no means comprehensive. The content also does not necessarily reflect Mercer's or the authors' point of view on the subject.
Resources	Roundup: Employer resources on H-1B reforms, regularly updated

US	
Status	⚠ **Effective dates vary.**
Development	**Career — Health** **2025 state paid family and medical leave contributions and benefits** Mandates requiring paid leave for an employee's own health condition exist in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island and Washington, along with Puerto Rico and Washington, DC. Delaware, Maine, Maryland and Minnesota will start similar programs in the next few years. Except for Hawaii and Puerto Rico, these jurisdictions also require paid family leave. Voluntary group family leave insurance is now available in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Michigan, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. Private employers may opt in to the state program for governmental employees in New Hampshire and Vermont.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com and katharine.marshall@mercer.com GRIST, updated January 29, 2025, and Paid family and medical leave: Snapshots across the US (Mercer, February 6, 2026)

US	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Career — Health** **Domestic partner benefits remain popular, but present challenges** Domestic partner benefits continue to be common among many employers. However, compliance complexities present challenges. The GRIST cited below (with minor updates and clarifications) reviews the major issues, particularly related to taxation and documentation, and provides useful tools, including a tax dependent flow chart, an employer domestic partner checklist, and two tables summarizing applicable state laws.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com and patty.cartwright@mercer.com GRIST, regularly updated

US	
Status	⚠ **Effective dates vary.**
Development	**Career — Health** **Roundup: State accrued paid leave mandates** More than one-third of all states have some form of accrued paid leave requirement. These laws have certain common features, including the following: • Which employers must comply, and which employees can accrue and take paid leave • How much paid leave employees may accumulate, use, and carry over from one year to the next • Whether a new hire waiting period is permissible before using accrued paid leave, and whether leave may be accrued and/or taken in increments other than one hour • Whether employers may front-load or credit total annual paid leave at the start of each year and avoid the need to track hourly accruals or provide year-end carryovers • What reasons — in addition to an employee's own illness — justify the use of accrued paid leave • What notice or documentation employers may require employees to provide, and what information about the paid leave entitlement employers must provide to employees • What protections — in addition to job — apply to employees who exercise rights to accrued paid leave • Whether employers must pay out unused accrued leave when employees separate from service, and what rules apply when an individual is rehired • Requirements typically don't apply to employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) in effect at the time of a law's passage.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com and katharine.marshall@mercer.com Roundup: State accrued paid leave mandates (Mercer, regularly updated)

US	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Beyond COBRA: State laws add complexity to continuation coverage** Though COBRA has endured for decades, state continuation laws are its less familiar sidekick. These laws (often referred to as "mini-COBRA" laws), fill in COBRA's gaps, particularly for small employers offering fully insured group health plans as well as fully insured large-employer group health plans (often referred to as "post-COBRA" laws), where coverage is required beyond COBRA's normal time frames. The GRIST cited below summarizes the major aspects of state continuation requirements.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com GRIST, November 12, 2024

US	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Group fixed-indemnity plans pose legal and tax issues** Concerns that fixed-indemnity plans may too easily be mistaken for comprehensive medical coverage or may improperly treat some benefit payments as tax free has led to a final rule from the departments of Labor, Treasury, and Health and Human Services. The rule requires fixed-indemnity plans to supply a new consumer notice beginning in 2025 but omits more sweeping proposals that would have required many employers to redesign their fixed-indemnity coverage. Treasury proposals to clarify the tax treatment of employer-provided accident and health plans — particularly the tax treatment of fixed-indemnity plans — also were left out of the final rule. The GRIST cited below provides background information about group fixed-indemnity plans, details about the new consumer notice, an overview of proposals left out of the final rule, and a summary of IRS guidance identifying a variety of fixed-indemnity designs (often paired with a wellness program) as improper "double dipping" schemes. This GRIST also summarizes provisions in the rule addressing individual fixed-indemnity plans and short-term limited duration insurance.
Resources	jennifer.wiseman@mercer.com and cheryl.hughes@mercer.com GRIST, August 27, 2024

US	
Status	⚠ **Effective dates vary.**
Development	**Career — Health** **Transportation plans offer valued benefits, but pose compliance issues** Since 1998, employees have been able to pay for qualified transportation fringe benefits through pretax salary reductions under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) § 132(f), and these benefits have become quite popular. (Employers could provide this benefit on a tax-advantaged basis as early as 1992.) The tax exemption extends to commuting expenses for transit passes, qualified parking, van pools, and in certain years, bicycles. While these benefits are not subject to cafeteria plan or ERISA rules, compliance difficulties exist, and a 2018 tax law that expired at the end of 2025 added complexities. The federal monthly limits are adjusted every year. Some state and local jurisdictions have imposed employer mandates, such as leveraging the tax advantage of commuter benefits and providing tax-related incentives.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com and cheryl.hughes@mercer.com GRIST, regularly updated

US	
Status	**Effective dates vary.**
Development	**Wealth** **User's Guide to SECURE 2.0** A dizzying array of legislation affecting defined contribution (DC) and defined benefit (DB) plans became law on December 29, 2022, as part of a fiscal 2023 government spending package. Capping several years of congressional efforts, the SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022 (Div. T of Pub. L. No. 117-328) is intended to build on changes made by the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act of 2019 (Div. O of Pub. L. No. 116-94). Navigating SECURE 2.0 is a formidable challenge. The statute consists of 120 pages of text and 90 individual sections — with no table of contents. To help employers and plan sponsors understand the legislation's implications, this guide provides a high-level summary of SECURE 2.0 provisions grouped topically, including separate treatment of provisions specific to DC and DB plans. The six tables in this guide describe statutory changes and their effective dates, identify whether the changes are mandatory or optional for employers, and provide initial observations, including implementation challenges for which agency guidance would be helpful. The act also includes several apparent drafting errors for which Congress intends to introduce technical corrections legislation. Those errors are noted in the relevant sections of the guide. This guide doesn't address SECURE 2.0's employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) provisions and a handful of other nonbenefit-related provisions. When referring to the original SECURE Act, this guide uses the term "SECURE 1.0" to avoid any confusion between the laws. This guide is updated periodically to reflect additional information and guidance.
Resources	margaret.berger@mercer.com, matthew.calloway@mercer.com, and brian.kearney@mercer.com User's guide to SECURE 2.0, periodically updated

US	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Career** **Roundup: Employer resources on the changing landscape of DEI** In June 2023, the US Supreme Court in *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College* ruled colleges' use of race as a factor in student admissions is unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause. Since the decision, various viewpoints have emerged on the ruling's effect on companies' diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs. While the Biden administration actively supported affirmative action and various DEI initiatives, President Trump's administration adopted a firm stance against DEI programs in both the federal government and private sectors, issuing several executive orders (EOs) to limit these efforts. This roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles, and viewpoints about the varying aspects and issues to consider regarding employers' DEI programs.
Resources	Roundup, regularly updated

US	
Status	**Effective dates vary.**
Development	**Career** **Roundup: Employer resources on noncompete restrictions** Noncompete agreements prevent former employees from working for a competing employer or starting a competing business for a certain time period after their employment ends. At the federal level, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), under the Biden administration, finalized a rule banning noncompetes. In August 2024, a federal judge in Texas blocked the rule from taking effect nationwide. While the FTC appealed the decision, the current FTC, under the Trump administration, will not defend this rule. At the moment, it is unclear as to what position the FTC will take on noncompete agreements. On September 4, 2025, the FTC launched a public inquiry to better understand the scope, prevalence and effects of employer noncompete actions, as well as to gather information to inform possible enforcement actions. At the state level, several states have generally banned noncompete agreements. Numerous other states have enacted restrictions, such as only allowing noncompete agreements for employees above a certain salary threshold. This roundup focuses on recent federal and state actions to restrict noncompete provisions and provides links to federal and state resources from organizations, government websites, third-party analyses, news articles, and viewpoints.
Resources	Roundup, regularly updated

US — States	
Status	**Compliance dates vary.**
Development	**Health** **Some states require group health plan sponsor reporting** Several states and localities have group health plan reporting requirements. The GRIST cited below summarizes key reporting mandates in three categories: individual health coverage mandates, health plan assessments and surcharges, and other types of reporting. This year, a new table was added to describe individual tax liability for failure to maintain minimum essential coverage (MEC) in the five states (plus Washington, DC) that impose MEC mandates.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com and dorian.smith@mercer.com GRIST, regularly updated

US — States	
Status	**Effective dates vary.**
Development	**Wealth** **Resources for tracking state and local retirement initiatives** This GRIST summarizes state and local retirement initiatives for private-sector workers and rounds up relevant Mercer and third-party resources. This listing is updated periodically and may not always reflect the latest development in every locality.
Resources	margaret.berger@mercer.com and brian.kearney@mercer.com GRIST, regularly updated

US — States	
Status	**Effective dates vary.**
Development	**Career** **Roundup: Employer resources on states' recent equal pay laws** The federal Equal Pay Act of 1963 requires that men and women in the same workplace receive equal pay for equal work. In recent years, many states have taken further efforts to address equal pay, such as enacting laws that prohibit employers from asking job applicants about salary history, requiring disclosure of salary ranges and pay data, protecting employees who disclose their pay, expanding equal pay protections for characteristics other than sex, and broadening comparisons of work and pay. In 2023, New Jersey and Illinois expanded equal pay protections to temporary workers. Stronger federal legislation — the Paycheck Fairness Act — was first introduced in 1997 but has not passed after numerous attempts — most recently in June 2021. This roundup primarily focuses on recent state legislative initiatives pertaining to salary history bans and salary range disclosure requirements that affect private sector employers, and provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles, and viewpoints. Certain cities have also acted, but they are generally beyond the scope of this roundup.
Resources	Roundup, regularly updated

US — States	
Status	**Effective dates vary.**
Development	**Career** **Roundup: Employer resources on states' recreational marijuana laws** Twenty-four states, plus Guam and Washington, DC, have legalized the possession and personal use of marijuana for recreational purposes. To provide employers with some information on states' actions and the varying employment considerations involved, this roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles, and viewpoints on marijuana usage for recreational purposes. Thirty-eight states, plus Guam, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands and Washington, DC, have legalized marijuana use for medical purposes, but this roundup focuses on legal recreational marijuana use and its implications for employers. The aggregated content in each section is organized in reverse chronological order and is by no means comprehensive. It also does not necessarily reflect Mercer's or the authors' point of view on the subject.
Resources	Roundup, regularly updated

US — States	
Status	**Effective dates vary.**
Development	**Career** **Roundup: Employer resources on minimum wage increases** On March 14, 2025, President Trump rescinded former President Biden's April 2021 executive order requiring federal contractors to pay a $15 hourly minimum wage to workers for new federal contract solicitations starting January 30, 2022, and increasing to $17.75/hour in 2025. Federal appeals courts have different positions on the legality of the 2021 order, and the Department of Labor rules implementing the order remain in place. Executive Order 13658 — which was implemented by the Obama administration and currently requires federal contractors to pay $13.30/hour — also remains. Numerous states have taken action to gradually increase the minimum wage to at least $15/hour for most employees. To help employers prepare and address related issues, this roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles, and viewpoints.
Resources	Roundup, regularly updated

US — States	
Status	**Effective dates vary.**
Development	**Career** **Roundup: Employer resources on hairstyle nondiscrimination laws** The Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair (CROWN) Act movement in the United States is meant to prohibit discrimination based on natural hair texture or hairstyles normally associated with race, such as braids, locks, twists, curls, cornrows, Afros, head wraps or bantu knots. The official campaign of the CROWN Act is led by the CROWN Coalition. Federal legislation, supported by the Biden administration, passed the House during the last session of Congress — but was not enacted. Many states have already passed CROWN Acts, and many others are considering legislation. To help employers ensure their employee handbooks and appearance policies are nondiscriminatory and comply with federal, state, and local laws, this roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles, and viewpoints.
Resources	Roundup, regularly updated

US — California (new)	
Status	**Effective dates vary.**
Development	**Health** **Menopausal coverage law required** As a result of 2026 Ch. 27 (SB 164), fully insured plans and healthcare service plans (including HMOs) will have to cover Food and Drug Administration-approved treatments for menopausal symptoms. Also, the law imposes these requirements: • Plans must include a program to ensure participants have access to current menopause information and covered items and services, • Coverage must be available without discrimination on the basis of gender expression or identity. • Specific standards for medical necessity determination and utilization review criteria apply. These provisions appear to take effect January 1, 2027, except for the information program requirement, which is effective July 1, 2027. With a few exceptions (like domestic partner coverage), California generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued in another state, as long as both an employer's principal place of business and a majority of employees are located outside of California. The law does not affect self-funded ERISA plans.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2026 Ch. 27 (SB 164) (Legislature, June 30, 2026)

US — California (new)	
Status	**Effective dates vary.**
Development	**Health** **New laws impact health plan costs** Governor Gavin Newsom's budget revision included a drastic increase in the managed care organization (MCO) tax, which generated about $7.5 billion in revenues for the current fiscal year. The governor's plan would increase the MCO tax to $575 million in 2026-27, and $2.3 billion in 2027-28 and 2028-29. The tax would apply to state-regulated MCOs, including Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs). Also, the governor's plan would — for the first time — impose a sales tax on purchases of software-as-a-service (SAAS), which would adversely affect healthcare vendors and providers operating in the state. SB 125, approved by the Assembly (57-20), includes the increase in taxes on MCOs, which include HMOs subject to state law. SB 122, approved by the Assembly (56-20), includes the SAAS tax.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com SB 125 (Legislature, June 29, 2026) and SB 122 (Legislature, June 29, 2026)

US — California (new)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Tax increase on managed care organizations becomes law** The governor has signed 2026 Ch. 26 (SB 125), which increases the tax on managed care organizations, including Health Maintenance Organizations regulated by state law. The higher tax will very likely increase insurers' costs and result in higher premiums.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2026 Ch. 26 (SB 125) (Legislature, June 29, 2026)

US — California (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	**Reports needed to be provided by July 1, 2026.**
Development	**Health** **Prior authorization report deadline passes** A 2025 law (2025 Ch. 408 (SB 306) created a process to implement a prior authorization "gold carding" program for fully insured plans. By July 1, 2206, health insurers and healthcare service plans, including Health Maintenance Organizations, must submit detailed prior authorization reports to the Department of Managed Health Care and Department of Insurance, respectively. Using these reports, the departments will identify services approved at least 90% of the time and publish a list by July 1, 2027. By January 1, 2028, affected plans may not require prior authorization for services on the list, unless there is a determination of fraud or clinically inappropriate care. Unless extended, the law expires on January 1, 2034. In addition, with a few exceptions, (such as domestic partner coverage), California generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued in another state when the employer's principal place of business and a majority of employees are located outside California. The law does not affect self-funded ERISA plans.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2025 Ch. 408 (SB 306) (Legislature, October 6, 2025)

US — California — San Francisco (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Career — Health** **Minimum compensation ordinance rates issues** San Francisco's Minimum Compensation Ordinance (MCO) requires most city service contractors and San Francisco airport tenants to provide the following to covered employees: • A minimum hourly wage • 12 days off with pay per year (or cash equivalent) • 10 days off without pay per year. The minimum hourly wage increases at specified times. Here is the latest information: • For-profit employers: $22.01 as of July 1, up from $21.54 • Nonprofit employers: $23.50 as of July 1, up from $23.00 • Public-entity employers: $25.00 as of July 1, up from $23.00. It will then increase to $25.50 on January 1, 2027.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com Minimum compensation ordinance (Government)

California — San Francisco (new)	
Status	⚠ **January 1, 2027**
Development	**Health** **Health Care Accountability Ordinance standards updated for 2027** Starting in 2027, San Francisco contractors and lessees (and their subcontractors and subtenants) must ensure health plan coverage for covered employees meets updated requirements under the Health Care Accountability Ordinance (HCAO). Among the 16 HCAO standards, three limits will increase for 2027: • In-network, self-only out-of-pocket maximum: $12,000 — up from $10,600 in 2026 • Maximum medical deductible: $3,200 — up from $3,000 in 2026 • Maximum prescription drug deductible: $500 — up from $400 in 2026 As a reminder, compliant coverage cannot require an employee contribution for self-only coverage. In addition, plans must satisfy one of the following: • Meet all 16 HCAO standards • Be a California- issued gold- or platinum-level plan (or have at least a 76% actuarial value) that covers 100% of the deductible (employer Health Reimbursement Arrangements/Health Savings Account contributions count) and meets 11 of the 16 standards.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com Minimum standards (Department of Public Health, June 2026)

US — California — San Francisco (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Health Care Accountability Ordinance rates take effect** The Health Care Accountability Ordinance requires most city contractors to provide healthcare benefits meeting minimum standards. Alternatively, employers can make a payment to the San Francisco General Hospital based on an hourly rate for each covered employee. These rates change every July 1. The new rates are $8 per hour, capped at $320 per week.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com Health Care Accountability Ordinance (Government)

US — Colorado (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Food and Drug Administration allows Colorado to import prescription drugs** The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized Colorado to start a program for importing certain prescription drugs from Canada under § 804, Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. Colorado joins Florida (January 2024) as the only state to receive the FDA go-ahead. Additional steps are necessary for each imported drug, as well as a level of cooperation from Canada. Florida's program has not yet become operational despite FDA extensions, according to reports.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com Importation program under Section 804 of the FD&C Act (FDA, January 16, 2026)

US — Colorado (new)	
Status	⚠ **Effective January 1, 2027, for individual and small group markets, and January 1, 2028, for the large group market**
Development	**Health** **Prescription utilization review for fully insured plans restricted** Colorado Senate Bill 26-006 prohibits health insurance cost sharing, copayments, and deductibles for nonopioid pain management drugs from exceeding the cost sharing that applies to opioid drugs prescribed for similar purposes. The cost-sharing requirement does not apply to the state governmental health plan, and it does not apply to the extent it would cause a high-deductible health plan to lose Health Savings Account-qualifying status. This cost-sharing provision will become inoperative if the state insurance division determines it would create a state obligation to defray coverage costs under the Affordable Care Act. If it remains operative, it will take effect on August 12. Also, the law also limits utilization review standards — including prior authorization and step therapy — for Federal Drug Agency-approved nonopioid pain management drugs; these standards can be no more restrictive than the least restrictive utilization review standards applicable to opioid drugs prescribed for similar purposes. In addition, beginning January 1, 2027 (individual and small group markets) and January 1, 2028 (large group market), fully insured plans must cover at least one nonopioid drug as a clinically appropriate alternative to an opioid drug. Colorado generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued in another state, and the law does not affect self-funded ERISA plans.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com SB 26-006 (Legislature, June 3, 2026)

US — Colorado (new)	
Status	**Effective January 1, 2028**
Development	**Health** **Insured plans must apply third-party financial assistance to cost sharing for prescription drugs** Colorado's SB 26-167 requires fully insured health plans to apply third-party financial assistance toward participants' prescription drug cost sharing. When determining amounts application to the plan's out-of-pocket maximum and other cost sharing requirements, fully insured plans must include payments made by any third party, up to the plan's in-network rate. The law does not include an exception for situations in which applying third-party assistance could jeopardize a high-deductible health plan's (Health Savings Account) qualifying status. Participants must still comply with a plan's prior authorization and step therapy protocols. The law will take effect on January 1, 2028. Colorado generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued in another state. The law does not affect self-funded ERISA plans. Approximately half of US states (as well as Puerto Rico and Washington, DC) have enacted similar restrictions intended to prohibit so-called "copay accumulator" programs. New Jersey was the most recent state to adopt this type of law.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com SB 26-167 (Legislature, June 4, 2026)

US — Georgia (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Portable benefits accounts for nonemployees enacted** The Voluntary Portable Benefit Plan Act (2026 Act 466 (HB 987)) permits voluntary contributions to portable benefit accounts (PBAs), allowing independent contractors to fund the accounts via withdrawals from compensation. PBAs can be used to fund health insurance, unemployment insurance, disability insurance, life insurance, or retirement benefits. PBA contributions will not affect the individual's employment classification. The law does not provide favorable state tax treatment, even though Georgia a state income tax.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2026 Act 466 (HB 987) (Legislature, May 11, 2026)

US — Hawaii (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Career — Health** **Unpaid family leave law changed to include qualifying military exigencies** Under 2026 Act 13 (SB 3082), eligible employees may take up to four weeks of unpaid family leave for a qualifying military exigency, as defined by federal Family and Medical Leave Act regulations.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2026 Act 13 (SB 3082) (Legislature, May 19, 2026)

US — Iowa (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Clarification of how insurance laws apply to HSA qualifying high-deductible health plans** Iowa's new law (HF 2185) clarifies that when a health plan's cost sharing would otherwise make a participant ineligible for a Health Savings Account, the cost sharing may apply only after the participant has satisfied the minimum annual deductible. Preventive care services, as defined by tax codes, are excluded from this requirement. Iowa generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued in another state. The law does not affect self-funded plans governed by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com HF 2185 (Legislature, May 15, 2026)

US — Kansas (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	⚠ **Generally effective July 1, 2026**
Development	**Career — Health — Wealth** **Portable benefit plan for independent contractors established** HB 2602 establishes a framework for portable benefit plans for independent contractors and provides a state tax exclusion for contributions made by both the hiring party and the individual. Permitted benefits include health insurance, income replacement insurance, disability insurance, life insurance, and retirement benefits. As in Alabama and Tennessee (which enacted similar laws in 2025), the accounts are individually owned and participation cannot be used to determine a worker's classification as an employee or an independent contractor. The law generally took effect July 1, 2026, while the state tax provisions apply beginning with the 2027 tax year.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com HB 2602 (Legislature, April 9, 2026)

US — Kentucky (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Law clarifies how insurance mandates apply to Health Savings Account-qualifying high deductible health plans** Under 2026 Ch. 27 (HB 184), any high deductible health plan cost-sharing requirements apply only after the minimum deductible under § 223 of the Internal Revenue Code is met. The law will take effect for plan years starting on or after July 15, 2026, (i.e., 90 days after legislative adjournment).
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2026 Ch. 27 (HB 184) (Legislature, April 3, 2026)

US — Louisiana (new)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Career — Health** **Paid family leave insurance law enacted** Louisiana is the latest state to authorize voluntary paid family leave (PFL) insurance. Under 2026 Act 817 (HB 591), now effective, life and disability insurers may offer PFL coverage as a stand-alone policy or as a rider. The law provides flexibility regarding eligibility criteria, qualifying reasons for leave, waiting periods, and benefit levels and offsets, but requires at least two weeks of leave within a 52-week period.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2026 Act 817 (HB 591) (Legislature, June 8, 2026)

US — Louisiana (new)	
Status	**January 1, 2027**
Development	**Health** **Prior authorization law enacted** Under 2026 Act 706 (HB 1154), fully insured plans cannot require prior authorization for nonopioid, generic drugs when prescribed by a board-certified physician or other provider holding the appropriate specialty certification. The requirement applies to plan years beginning in 2027. Louisiana generally applies its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to Louisiana residents covered by fully insured plans issued in other states. The law does not affect self-funded ERISA plans.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com HB 1154 (Legislature, June 2, 2026)

US — Louisiana (new)	
Status	⚠ **Effective dates vary.**
Development	**Career — Health** **Law addresses pharmacy benefit manager's manufacturer rebates, fees, standard of care and transparency** New law 2026 Act 914 (SB 387) has varying effective dates. These provisions took effect June 12: • Right of the department of insurance, insurers, and plans to audit pharmacy benefit managers (PBM) annually • No PBM prohibition or restriction on a pharmacy offering services of products to patients. These provisions will take effect January 1, 2027: • A PBM's duty to act solely for the benefit of insurers, plans, and participants. • Requirement for PBM contracts to specify all forms of revenue and acknowledge that spread pricing is forbidden • Engaging in conduct that increases drug cost, restricts or impairs drug access, or otherwise interferes with acting in the best interest of insurers, plans, and participants. These provisions will take effect January 1, 2028: • 100% rebate pass-through to plan sponsors • Prohibition against obtaining a rebate, incentive, inducement, or discount for not placing drugs on a formulary, unless it is given to the insurer or plan sponsor. • PBM compensation limited to a flat-dollar service fee and flat-dollar performance bonus, as stated in the PBM contract • Prohibition against formularies favoring brand drugs over therapeutically equivalent generic or biosimilar drugs (unless brand drugs are cheaper) and using a formulary to effectively ban pharmacies • Prohibition against PBM fees based directly on drug list prices, acquisition cost, average wholesale cost, or any other metric for drug pricing Noncompliance with several provisions carry a fine of $25,000 per violation.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2026 Act 914 (SB 387) (Legislature, June 12, 2026)

US — Louisiana (new)	
Status	**Applies retroactively to January 1, 2026**
Development	**Health** **Law sets minimum standards for pharmacy benefit manager reimbursements of pharmacies** The existing statute requires pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) to reimburse pharmacies based on the National Average Drug Acquisition Cost (NADAC). The new law requires PBM reimbursement at the pharmacy's actual drug acquisition cost, using NADAC as a minimum reimbursement benchmark (or wholesale acquisition cost, if NADAC is unavailable). PBMs must also pay a dispensing fee equal to the amount set under the state Medicaid program (currently $11.81 per drug). The department of insurance may request claims-level data to verify compliance. Neither law contains expressly limits its application scope to fully insured plans. However, SB 387 applies "only to the extent not preempted or otherwise prohibited by federal law." Louisiana generally applies its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to state residents covered under fully insured plans issued in other states.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2026 Act 913 (HB 1236) (Legislature, June 12, 2026)

US — Louisiana (previously covered, soon to be effective)	
Status	**Effective on August 1, 2026**
Development	**Health** **Portable benefit accounts for independent workers established** The Independent Contractor Voluntary Portable Benefits Act establishes portable benefits accounts (PBAs), which may be administered by banks, investment managers, or technology/program managers offering services through a bank or investment management firm. The accounts can fund benefits, including health, income-replacement, disability, life, and retirement. A hiring party may contribute or withhold contributions from pay with proper notice to, and consent of, the individual. Contributions cannot be used to determine employment classification, employer liability, or be treated as evidence of an employment relationship under Louisiana workers' compensation or employment security laws. The law does not address state taxation, even though Louisiana has a state income tax.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2026 Act 299 (HB 301) (Legislature, May 22, 2026)

US — Maine (previously covered, soon to be effective)	
Status	**Effective July 29, 2026**
Development	**Career** **Pay transparency law soon to be effective** Maine has enacted a law (LD 54), effective July 29, 2026, that will require employers to post pay ranges for jobs, disclose pay ranges upon request, and keep employee pay records. **Posting of pay ranges**. Employers with 10 or more employees must ensure that job postings (electronic or hard copy) include the prospective range of pay the employer will offer a successful applicant. If the position is commission-only, the posting must clearly state that. "Range of pay" includes, but is not limited to: • Any applicable pay scale • A previously determined range of wages for the position • The actual range of wages for those currently holding equivalent positions • The budgeted amount for the position. **Pay range disclosure and record retention**. On employee request, employers must disclose the range of pay offered for the employee's position. An employer must maintain a record of each position held by an employee and their pay history in each position for the duration of the employee's employment and for three years after employment ends.
Resources	LD 54 (Legislature, April 24, 2026)

US — Maryland (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Mandated preventive services law enacted** As a result of 2026 Chs. 7 and 8 (HB 637, SB 385), mandated preventive services will be based on recommendations by the state secretary of health, in addition to the federal agencies authorized by the Affordable Care Act. Previously, insurers had to implement changes within three months of the recommendations; the time period is now extended to one year. Maryland generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued outside of the state. The laws do not affect self-funded ERISA plans.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2026 Chs. 7 and 8 (HB 637, SB 385) (Legislature, April 14, 2026)

US — Maryland (new)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Employer registration for paid family medical leave program begins** The Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) Division announced that covered employers can now register and create a FAMLI account. Required information includes the authorized officer's email address, phone number, and government-issued ID, along with the employer's Employer Identification Number, legal name, North American Industry Classification System code, and resident agent. Employers can then connect a third-party agent to their account, if applicable. Third-party agents cannot register for employers. Contributions start on January 1, 2027, and the first quarterly wage and hour report will be due in April 2027.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com Register with Maryland Family and Medical Leave Insurance (Government)

US — New Jersey (new)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Employer healthcare assistance contribution required** AB 5324 requires employers with at least 50 employees and dependents on Medicaid to pay a yearly fee, effective for the budget year starting on July 1, 2026.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com AB 5324 (Legislature, June 30, 2026)

US — New Jersey (previously covered, updated)	
Status	⚠ **Extended to December 31, 2027**
Development	**Health** **Telehealth parity extended** New Jersey's telehealth parity mandate, which requires reimbursement parity for services delivered in-person and via telehealth — has been extended through December 31, 2027. It was scheduled to expire on July 1, 2026. Under 2026 Ch. 105 (SB 3947), the requirement applies to fully insured plans. New Jersey generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued in another state. The law does not affect self-funded ERISA plans.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com Governor Sherrill takes action on legislation (Government, June 30, 2026)

US — New Jersey (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Career — Health** **Job protection for leaves expanded** New Jersey law enacted legislation that amends the Family Leave Act (FLA) — the state's unpaid family leave law — and the Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) and Family Leave Insurance (FLI) programs, which together make up the state's paid family and medical leave (PFML) framework. The following changes took effect on July 17, 2026, under 2026 Ch. 279 (AB 3451): • **FLA**. Previously, the FLA applied to employers with 30 or more employees. The new law lowers this threshold to 15 employees. • Employee eligibility requirements for protected leave are reduced to three months of employment, and 250 hours worked in the prior 12 months — previously, eligibility required at least one year of employment and 1,000 hours worked in the prior 12 months. • **TDI/FLI**. Previously, eligibility for TDI/FLI benefits was separate from an employee's entitlement to protected leave. The receipt of these benefits did not, by itself, confer job protection. This created situations in which employees could qualify for FLI benefits but not for FLA protections due to different eligibility standards. The new law extends FLA protections to employees who receive FLI benefits and satisfy the revised FLA eligibility thresholds. The law also provides that an employee eligible for both TDI/FLI benefits and paid sick leave under the state's Earned Sick Leave Law may choose the order in which to use those benefits, but may not receive both concurrently.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com New Jersey Family Leave Act (Government) and Bill A3451 (Legislature, January 17, 2026)

US — New Mexico (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Immunization law insurance provisions take effect** 2025 Ch. 5 (SB 3, Spec. Sess. 1), established immunization guidelines for children and requires vaccines acquired through the Statewide Vaccine Purchasing Program be recommended by the Department of Health. For fully insured plans, the law prohibits cost sharing for immunizations recommended by the Department of Health. The law generally took effect on October 2, 2025, and the insurance-related provisions became effective on July 1, 2026. New Mexico generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued in another state. Except with respect to access, the law does not directly affect self-funded ERISA plans.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2025 Ch. 5 (SB 3, Spec. Sess. 1) (Legislature, October 8, 2025)

US — Puerto Rico	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Career — Health** **Benefit and leave laws vary** Puerto Rico is an unincorporated territory within the US with a separate tax code, constitution, and benefit and insurance laws. Nonetheless, many (but not all) US laws apply to this territory of approximately three million residents. The GRIST cited below summarizes major requirements and special issues, including an overview of complicated tax-related health and fringe benefit rules, leave laws, the ACA, and more.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com GRIST, August 12, 2024

US — Rhode Island (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Career — Health** **Temporary disability insurance benefit maximums increased** Rhode Island has increased the temporary disability insurance (TDI) maximum weekly benefit under the portion of its paid family and medical leave (PFML) program, effective July 1, 2026. The Department of Labor and Training raised the maximum weekly benefit from $1,103 to $1,150, a 4.3% increase. The updated cap applies to leave starting on or after July 1. The state's TDI and temporary caregiver law also provides a dependent allowance that can increase benefits by up to 35% for up to five dependents. As a result, the maximum weekly TDI benefit for employees with five or more dependents increased from $1,489 to $1,552, also effective July 1.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com Maximum weekly benefit amounts for unemployment and temporary disability insurance to increase in July (Department of Labor and Training, June 22, 2026)

US — Rhode Island (new)	
Status	⚠ **Effective for plan years starting on or after January 1, 2027.**
Development	**Health** **Vaccine law enacted** Rhode Island law requires fully insured and group medical plans, health maintenance organizations, the state governmental plan, and state Medicaid to cover vaccines recommended by the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) without cost sharing. HB 7625 expands this requirement by adding RIDOH recommendations to the existing statutory requirement to include recommendations by the federal Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices and the Academy of Pediatrics. The law applies to plan years starting on or after January 1, 2027. Rhode Island generally applies its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to state residents covered under fully insured plans issued in another state. The law does not affect self-funded ERISA plans.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com HB 7625 (Legislature)

US — South Carolina (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Wellness vendor law enacted** A new South Carolina law requires licensing of "wellness reimbursement program" administrators and imposes a duty of good faith and fair dealing on insurance brokers that offer, sell, market, or promote these programs. Under 2026 Act 215 (HB 4305), entities operating a wellness reimbursement program must obtain a license by the state department of insurance and comply with ERISA requirements or, alternatively, submit a letter from Internal Revenue Service or Department of Labor L approving the program. A "wellness reimbursement program" is defined as a self-insured medical reimbursement plan or a wellness integrated medical plan expense reimbursement plan established under § 105 and § 125 of the Internal Revenue Code and 26 CFR § 1.105-11. The law also imposes specific obligations on program administrators, including employer disclosure requirements and an obligation to defend and indemnify employees and employers in litigation if the program results in a taxable event for either party. Civil and criminal penalties also apply for noncompliance.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2026 Act 215 (HB 4305) (Legislature, May 19, 2026)

US — South Dakota (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Prior authorization law enacted** HB 1199 requires fully insured plans to submit annual reports on their prior authorization activities and to eliminate prior authorization requirements that are routinely approved. Specifically, plans must remove prior authorization requirements when "requests are routinely approved with such frequency as to demonstrate that the prior authorization requirement does not promote healthcare quality or reduce healthcare spending, to a degree that justifies the plan's administrative costs associated with the prior authorization requirement." Although the law does not establish a precise threshold, the annual report must identify any prior authorization categories with an approval rate of at least 80%. The state division of insurance must publish each report within 60 days of receipt. This law excludes prescription drug or dental benefits. South Dakota generally does not apply its insurance laws on fully insured plans issued in another state, and the law does not affect self-funded plans.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com HB 1199 (Legislature, March 30, 2026)

US — Tennessee (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	⚠ **Effective for agreements entered into on or after July 1, 2026.**
Development	**Career** **Law clarifies when noncompetes are reasonable and bans them for employees earning less than $70,000/year** Tennessee's law HB 1034 clarifies when noncompetes are reasonable and bans noncompete agreements entered into on or after July 1, 2026, for workers who earn less than $70,000/year. Highlights include: • Post-relationship restraints of two years or less are presumed reasonable for employees. Courts may modify overbroad covenants to make them reasonable and enforceable. • Employers will not be able to require, request, or enforce noncompete agreements against employees whose annualized compensation is less than $70,000. "Annualized compensation" includes wages/salary, commissions, nondiscretionary bonuses, other remuneration. For hourly workers, the hourly rate will be multiplied by 40 and then by 52. Any noncompete executed in violation of this threshold will be void and unenforceable as a matter of public policy. • Preserved and enforceable agreement types are confidentiality/nondisclosure agreements; client/customer nonsolicitation agreements and employee nonsolicitation agreements.
Resources	HB 1034 (Legislature)

US — Texas (new)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Department of Insurance issues AI guidance** The Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) published a bulletin clarifying how existing state law applies to the use of artificial intelligence (AI) by regulated entities, particularly insurers. Bulletin B-0003-26 identifies 10 laws that may apply to AI use, with a primary focus on unfair trade practices and discrimination. TDI sets out six expectations: • **Standards**. All AI decisions must not be inaccurate, arbitrary, capricious, or unfairly discriminatory. • **Controls**. Entities must implement effective controls to mitigate the risk of adverse consumer outcomes. • **Decisions**. All "consequential" decisions must be reviewed and approved by a person before any action is taken. • **Governance**. TDI expects robust governance and risk management controls, including verification and testing to detect errors and bias in AI use. • **Monitoring**. TDI will monitor AI use through examinations, product filings, and complaint handling. • **Inquiries**. Entities should expect inquiries concerning governance frameworks, risk management, data and privacy protections, and internal controls as part of TDI's oversight.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com Bulletin B-0003-26 (TDI, June 12, 2026)

US — Virginia (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	Currently effective
Development	**Career** **Wage transparency, salary history ban law take effect** Companion bills (HB 636 and SB 215) that took effect on July 1, 2026, prohibit employers from seeking prospective employees' wage or salary history and require the disclosure of wage or salary ranges. **Salary history ban**. Employers are prohibited from: • Seeking the wage or salary history of a prospective employee • Relying on that history when considering a candidate for employment • Using that history to set wages or salary upon hire • Refusing to interview, hire, employ, or promote or otherwise retaliating against a prospective or current employee for not providing wage or salary history or requesting a wage or salary range. **Wage transparency**. Employers must disclose the wage, salary or wage or salary range in every public and internal posting for jobs, promotions, transfers, or other employment opportunities. The wage or salary range must be set in good faith. Employers may not refuse to interview, hire or promote or otherwise retaliate against a prospective or current employee for requesting a wage or salary range. **Penalties**. The Attorney General may bring a civil action to enforce these requirements; employers face a penalty up to $1,000 for the first violation and up to $5,000 for subsequent violations. Courts may award other legal and equitable relief. Also, an aggrieved applicant or employee may sue within one year of violations of job-posting requirements, but employers are first given a 15-day period to correct the posting after notice is given.
Resources	HB 636 and SB 215 (Legislature, April 22, 2026)

US — Virginia (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	Currently effective
Development	**Health** **Prior authorization law take effect** Ch. 925 (HB 481) — generally effective July 1, 2026 — restricts insurers from issuing adverse benefit determinations for prior authorization decisions for prescription drugs unless approved by a licensed physician or, if unavailable, a licensed pharmacist. For healthcare services, approval must be given by a licensed physician or, if unavailable, a licensed mental health provider (for mental health services) or licensed dentist (for dental services). While the law does not explicitly mention technology, the measure appears driven by concerns about using artificial intelligence and algorithms in prior authorization. Virginia generally does not apply its insurance laws extraterritorially to fully insured plans issued outside the state.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2026 Ch. 925 (HB 481, April 13, 2026)

US — Wyoming (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Prior authorization insurance law take effect** Wyoming enacted 2023 Ch. 19 (HB 14), which imposes restrictions on prior authorization requirements for fully insured plans. The law applies to insurers and contracted utilization review entities, an undefined term in the law. Highlights include**:** • Expanded disclosure requirements • Decision timeframes of 72 hours for urgent claims and five days for nonurgent claims (the federal ERISA standard is 72 hours and 15 days, respectively) • Prohibition on prior authorization for medications used to treat opioid use disorder • A “gold carding” mandate, under which providers are exempt from prior authorization if at least 90% of their prior authorization requests were approved during the preceding 12 months. • A requirement for outpatient and prescription drug prior authorizations to remain valid for at least one year. HB 14 also directs the state’s Department of Insurance to initiate rulemaking and further define terms. All provisions took effect on July 1, 2024, except for “gold carding,” which took effect on January 1, 2026. The extent to which Wyoming insurance laws apply extraterritorially remains unclear.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2023 Ch. 19 (HB 14) (Legislature, March 4, 2024)

US — Wyoming (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **Portable benefit accounts for nonemployees adopted** Wyoming enacted SF 41 establishing portable benefit accounts for independent contractors. These accounts allow contractors to buy medical, dental and vision coverage; income replacement insurance; and retirement benefits. Hiring parties may contribute to these accounts without impacting the contractor’s employment classification (i.e., employee vs. independent contractor) under state law. Contributions to the account or withholdings from the individual’s compensation are permitted if certain conditions are met. The accounts are owned by the individual contractors. The law took effect on July 1, 2026. Wyoming does not have a state individual income tax. Similar legislation was adopted by Alabama and Tennessee in 2025.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com SF 41 (Legislature, March 6, 2026)

US (previously covered, with upcoming effective dates)	
Development	**Career** • Safeguards for immigrants that will require employer action enacted in Washington — key date: October 1, 2026 • Trapped at Work Act amended in New York — key date: December 19, 2026 • Large private employers required to report pay data by race and gender in New York City — key date: Multi-year • Most noncompete agreements banned in Washington — key date: June 30, 2027 **Career — Health** • Broad workforce law that includes expanded wage transparency requirements enacted in Connecticut — key date: October 1, 2026 • Paid family medical leave contribution rate confirmed in Maryland— key date: January 1, 2027 • Paid family medical leave law delayed in Maryland — key date: January 1, 2027 • Paid family medical leave contribution rate confirmed in Maryland — key date: January 1, 2027 • Emergency rule mandating gender-affirming care coverage finalized in New Mexico — key date: January 1, 2027 • Effective date of paid family medical leave law's application to construction workers clarified in New York — key date: January 1, 2027 • Paid family leave law for unionized construction employees expanded in New York — key date: January 1, 2027 • Workplace protections for menstruation and menopause enacted in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — key date: January 1, 2027 • Paid sick leave law enacted in Virginia — Key date: January 1, 2027 • Salary and benefit disclosures in job postings to be required in Delaware — key date: September 26, 2027 • Contribution rates of paid family and medical leave program changed in Washington — key date: January 1, 2028 • Paid family medical leave law enacted in Virginia — key date: April 1, 2028 • Paid family medical leave law enacted in California — key date: July 1, 2028 **Career — Health** • Paid family medical leave contribution rate confirmed in Maryland — key date: January 1, 2027 • Emergency rule mandating gender-affirming care coverage finalized in New Mexico — key date: January 1, 2027 • Effective date of paid family medical leave law's application to construction workers clarified in New York — key date: January 1, 2027 • Paid family leave law for unionized construction employees expanded in New York — key date: January 1, 2027

US (previously covered, with upcoming effective dates) (continued)	
Development	• Paid family leave law for unionized construction employees expanded in New York — key date: January 1, 2027 • Workplace protections for menstruation and menopause enacted in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — key date: January 1, 2027 • Paid sick leave law enacted in Virginia — Key date: January 1, 2027 • Salary and benefit disclosures in job postings to be required in Delaware — key date: September 26, 2027 • Contribution rates of paid family and medical leave program changed in Washington — key date: January 1, 2028 • Paid family medical leave law enacted in Virginia — key date: April 1, 2028 • Paid family medical leave law enacted in California — key date: July 1, 2028 **Career — Health — Wealth** • Independent contractor/employee classification rules adopted in New Jersey — Key date: October 1, 2026 **Health** • Upper prescription drug limit set in Colorado — key date: Effective date unknown • Law addressing artificial intelligence in insurance coverage enacted in Alabama — key date: October 1, 2026 • Ground ambulance balanced billing law enacted in Alabama — key date: October 1, 2026 • Telehealth law enacted in Maryland — key date: October 1, 2026 • Association Self-Funded Health Benefit Plan Coverage Act enacted in Mississippi — key date: October 1, 2026 • Insurance law mandates gender detransition coverage in Montana — key date: October 1, 2026 • State-based exchange delivery to change in Oregon — key date: November 1, 2026 • Three covered services added to California's benchmark plans — key date: If approved by federal Department of Health and Human Services, inclusion will start in 2027 • Pharmacy benefit manager law enacted in Connecticut — key date: January 1, 2027 • Obesity and pre-diabetes treatment coverage mandated in Colorado — key date: January 1, 2027 • AI insurance law enacted in Georgia — key date: January 1, 2027 • Ground ambulance law passed in Illinois — key date: January 1, 2027 • Prior authorization law enacted in Kentucky — key date: January 1, 2027 • Paid family medical leave contribution rate confirmed in Maryland — key date: January 1, 2027 • 2027 individual-mandate coverage dollar limits set in Massachusetts — key date: January 1, 2027 • Pharmacy benefit manager law enacted in New Mexico — key date: January 1, 2027

US (previously covered, with upcoming effective dates) (continued)	
Development	**Health (continued)** • Health Savings Account compatibility law enacted in New York — key date: Plan years starting January 1, 2027 • Pharmacy benefit manager law enacted in Tennessee — key date: Plan years starting in 2027 • Insulin mandate law enacted in Virginia — key date: Plan years starting in 2027 • Perimenopause and menopause coverage required in Virginia — key date: Plan years starting in 2027 • Washington Partnership Access Line rates announced — key date: January 1, 2027 • Ground ambulance balance billing law enacted in West Virginia — key date: Plan years starting in 2027 • Three covered services added to California's benchmark plans — key date: If approved by federal Department of Health and Human Services, inclusion will start in 2027 • Pharmacy benefit manager law enacted in Virginia — key date: July 1, 2027 • Telehealth reimbursement parity extended in Hawaii — key date: December 31, 2027 • Prescription drug cost sharing capped in the individual and small group markets in Virginia — key date: Plan years starting in 2028 **Wealth** • Employers can contribute to Trump accounts starting next July — key date: July 2026 • Rules finalized for SECURE 2.0 'super catch-up" contributions — key date: 2027 plan year • Applicability date for final required minimum distribution regulations delayed again — key date: 2027 at the earliest • Individual Retirement Arrangements' amendment deadline for SECURE acts and more extended — key date: December 31, 2027

Uruguay (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	**Currently effective.**
Development	**Career** **Minimum wage increased** On July 1, 2026, the national monthly minimum wage increased to UYU$25,383, up from UYU$24,572.
Resources	Announcement (Spanish) (Ministry of Labor, December 9, 2025)

Section 4

Asia Pacific

Australia (new)	
Status	**Report**
Development	**Wealth** **Regulator urges further progress on superannuation death benefit claims** The Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) has again urged superannuation fund trustees to improve how they process death benefit claims. In *Report 831: Delivering on death benefits: Have super trustees stepped up?*, ASIC reviews trustees' performance following an earlier report published in March 2025. Highlights include: • Superannuation trustees have made only modest progress, and more work needs to be done to meet ASIC's expectations. • Claim handling needs to be more effective and timely. • Trustees should consider streamlining the processes to reduce unnecessary delay and administrative burden. • Trustees should encourage members to make valid binding nominations so outcomes are clearer and faster enhanced support is needed for First Nations members and other vulnerable claimants. • Examples of specific improvements that individual trustees could take to address these issues.
Resources	anthony.williams@mercer.com Report 831: Delivering on death benefits: Have super trustees stepped up? (ASIC, June 10, 2026)

Australia (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Wealth** **Regulator outlines approach to enforcing advertising ban during employee onboarding** The Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) has set out its transitional enforcement approach to the ban on advertising superannuation funds during the employee onboarding process, which took effect on July 1, 2026. The ban's purpose is to protect employees from being influenced to make uninformed decisions, including opening inappropriate products or unintentionally creating duplicate superannuation accounts. ASIC recognizes that it will take time for entities to build systems to comply. To reflect this, ASIC will take a balanced approach to enforcement of the advertising ban for a 12-month period, starting on July 1, 2026. During that period, enforcement action will likely be directed at serious or reckless misconduct and which does not arise from entities making honest attempts to comply. Exemptions to the ban include MySuper products that meet the legislated criteria, employer default funds, and an employee's stapled fund.
Resources	ASIC confirms approach to ban on advertising super funds during employee onboarding (ASIC, June 9, 2026)

Australia (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Wealth** **Regulator urges consideration of geopolitical risks** The Australia Prudential Authority (APRA) has published a letter with its expectations as to how entities should address geopolitical risk in the current operating environment. APRA considers that geopolitical shocks are a prudential issue that can impact the safety and resilience of regulated entities and the provision of critical financial services. APRA finds that while many entities recognize geopolitical risk, they are inconsistent in turning that awareness into robust risk management. Common weaknesses include treating geopolitical risk as separate from existing material risks, under-preparing for emerging threats like disinformation and foreign interference, and running crisis exercises that do not sufficiently test decision making, escalation and communication under real stress. APRA's minimum expectations suggest that entities — according to their size, business model and complexity — should incorporate geopolitical risk into their governance arrangements, risk appetite and strategic planning; actively monitor the geopolitical environment; and ensure crisis communication protocols respond quickly to false or misleading information. APRA also expects entities to consider operational resilience, third-party dependencies, personnel security, sanctions readiness and financial resilience under severe-but-plausible scenarios. APRA does not require a one-size-fits-all response — smaller, simpler entities should focus on the most material risks. However, APRA plans targeted readiness assessments in 2026-27 for larger entities with heightened exposure, including the superannuation sector.
Resources	ante.cugura@mercer.com Strengthening readiness for geopolitical shocks (APRA, June 17, 2026)

Australia (new)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Wealth** **Regulator's review of superannuation platform trustees issued** The Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) has released Report 833, which reviews how six superannuation platform trustees (responsible for 72% of member benefits) monitored and addressed potential risks to retirement savings. ASIC found little progress in key areas, highlighting "stark and persistent failures to protect retirement savings, including gaps in monitoring harmful advice fee deductions, unusual fees and investment patterns, and high-risk super switching activity." Highlights of the review include: • Advice fee caps are too high and poorly designed, with dollar caps as high as AU$25,000 and percentage-based caps as high as 10% of account balances. • Poor protection for low-balance members, particularly where the cost of advice is greater than the benefit received. • Limited review of advice documents and insufficient follow-up when concerns were identified. • Insufficient attention to business models during advice firm onboarding. ASIC found that trustees lacked adequate controls to identify potentially harmful models, including those linked to the Shield and First Guardian scheme collapses. • Inadequate monitoring of advisers. ASIC is also concerned about the reliance on manual monitoring and the suitability of the indicators being used. • Use of inappropriate switching business models, which are often associated with lead-generation activity and may be harmful to, or of little benefit for, members. • ASIC has proposed that platform providers monitor fee caps; introduce appropriate protections for low-balance members; review their advice document programs; strengthen onboarding processes for new advisers and advice licensees; and monitor advice fees and fund flows for patterns or irregularities. While ASIC's findings are directed at superannuation platform trustees, they are also relevant to other regulated superannuation trustees with adviser fee deduction arrangements.
Resources	anthony.williams@mercer.com Report 833: Safeguarding super: How well are platform trustees monitoring risks to retirement savings (ASIC, June 29, 2026

Australia (new)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Wealth** **Regulators announce simplification of financial accountability regime changes** The Australian Prudential Authority and Australian Securities and Investments Authority announced proposed changes on June 16, 2026, to the Financial Accountability Regime (FAR) that would reduce administrative burden and maintain accountability. The reforms would provide greater efficiency through reductions in routine compliance costs. Fewer accountability map updates and higher materiality thresholds would mean governance teams could focus on material issues rather than frequent low-impact notifications and reduced administrative costs for maintaining FAR artefacts. Highlights of the changes will: • Remove "key functions" from the Financial Accountability Regime (Regulator) Rules 2024, and entities will no longer be required to identify and report specific key functions in FAR documentation. • Increase the materiality threshold for notifications so fewer changes trigger mandatory notifications to APRA and ASIC. • Simplify accountability maps by removing the requirement to show accountable persons' direct reports. • Consult on removing fit-and-proper reporting. • Reduce documentary evidence requirements for Australian Financial Services (AFS) responsible managers. ASIC proposes these changes take effect from October 2026. APRA and ASIC will keep powers to request accountability statements and to act on governance or conduct failures. Simplified external filings do not replace the need for internal clarity about roles, responsibilities and reporting lines.
Resources	tasnima.bhuiyan@mercer.com APRA and ASIC announce FAR changes to reduce administrative burden (APRA, June 16, 2026)

Australia (new)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Wealth** **Division 296 regulations effective** On June 19, 2026, the Income Tax Assessment (1997 Act) Amendment (Building a Stronger and Fairer Super System and Other Measures) Regulations 2026, took immediate effect. They amend "Division 296" of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, which reduces the tax concessions on superannuation investment earnings for individuals with total superannuation balances exceeding AU$3 million. Highlights include: • Certain superannuation interests are defined as "excluded" and are exempt from Division 296 tax assessment. Examples include constitutionally protected funds held by current or former high level office holders, and pensions payable to certain members of the judiciary. • Setting out how specific funds must be valued for the purpose of reporting Total Superannuation Balance, which determines if the AU$3 million threshold is exceeded. • Prorating capital gains in large funds for Division 296 purposes for gains arising after July 1, 2026. • Providing specific direction on how Division 296 earnings must be attributed to relevant member interests within the fund. • Applying additional, modified rules to small superannuation funds. • Finalizing the government's "*Better Targeted Superannuation Concessions*" first announced in February 2023 and applying it to the 2026-27 financial year. The first "Division 296" assessment notices are expected in late 2027. Individuals can pay the tax liability personally or by releasing the payment from a nominated superannuation interest.
Resources	anthony.williams@mercer.com Income Tax Assessment (1997 Act) Amendment (Building a Stronger and Fairer Super System and Other Measures) Regulations 2026 (Government, June 18, 2026)

Australia (new)	
Status	**Proposal**
Development	**Wealth** **Proposed scams prevention framework code and rules issued** Australia's Treasury has published a consultation package on the Scams Prevention Framework (SPF). Comments were invited through June 25, 2026, and may be shared with SPF regulators. The package — comprising draft codes, rules and guidance — is intended to strengthen responses to scams by establishing clearer obligations for regulated sectors. The consultation is particularly relevant to the superannuation industry because scams increasingly target retirement savings, member data and digital channels. Highlights include: • A draft instrument proposes common code obligations that apply to all industry sectors, with additional sector-specific obligations for banks and digital platforms. A separate draft instrument addresses the telecommunications sector to reflect its distinct risks and controls. • Treasury also released draft SPF rules, explanatory materials and guidance to help stakeholders in reviewing the proposed framework. • A consultation paper seeks feedback on settings for internal dispute resolution, which will be important where scam complaints involve multiple entities. • Entities may have to demonstrate they maintain reasonable systems to identify scam risks, train staff, monitor transactions and communications, and deliver effective complaint handling.
Resources	ante.cugura@mercer.com Scams prevention framework codes and rules exposure draft (The Treasury, May 27, 2026)

Australia (new)	
Status	**Effective dates vary**
Development	**Wealth** **Capital gains tax and negative gearing changes enacted** The Treasury Laws Amendment (Tax Reform No. 1) Bill 2026 and Income Tax Rates Amendment (Tax Reform No. 1) Bill 2026 received Royal Assent on June 26, 2026. The Acts implement several 2026 Federal Budget tax reforms. Including: • **Negative gearing**. From July 1, 2027, negative gearing for residential property is limited to new builds. • **Capital gains tax (CGT)**. The 50% CGT discount for individuals, trusts, and partnerships is replaced by an indexed cost base (cost base indexation) for gains accruing from July 1, 2027. • **30% minimum CGT tax**. A 30% minimum tax applies to certain capital gains realised on or after July 1, 2027 (exemptions apply). • **Working Australians tax offset**. A nonrefundable offset of up to AU$250 applies from the 2027–28 income year for eligible Australian resident individuals that have income from labor. • **Standard deduction**. AU$1,000 standard deduction for work-related expenses applies from the 2026–2027 income year (taxpayers can generally choose the standard deduction or claim higher substantiated expenses). • From August 10, 2026, self-managed super funds will no longer be able to enter into limited recourse borrowing arrangements. They will still be able to borrow for the purpose of refinancing an arrangement commenced before that date. The Acts do not include the separate 30% minimum tax on certain trust structures announced in the Budget; the government has commenced a consultation on the implementation of this change, and has indicated it intends to introduce those measures in a future bill.
Resources	tasnima.bhuiyan@mercer.com Treasury Laws Amendment (Tax Reform No. 1) Bill 2026 and Income Tax Rates Amendment (Tax Reform No. 1) Bill 2026 (Legislature)

Australia (new)	
Status	**Consultation is open through July 29, 2026.**
Development	**Wealth** **Consultation on identifying issues in whistleblower frameworks** On June 2, 2026, Treasury issued a consultation seeking input on how Australia's corporate and tax whistleblowing frameworks are functioning in practice. This consultation is part of the statutory review of tax and corporate whistleblowing — a formal review process that assesses if the whistleblowing regimes are operating effectively and meeting their objectives. Comments are invited through July 29, 2026. For superannuation funds and trustees, the consultation is directly relevant because trustees operate in a highly regulated fiduciary environment where disclosure, confidentiality and reporting obligations intersect with whistleblower protections. As such, trustees must consider their internal reporting frameworks, breach reporting obligations to Australian Prudential Authority and the Australian Taxation Office and duties to beneficiaries. Highlights of the operational issues addressed in the consultation include: • Whether whistleblower protections should apply to trustee boards, in-house legal and compliance teams and contracted service providers. • If trustees would need to assess whether their internal policies and procedures adequately reflect the protections and reporting options available and whether staff and advisers have been given clear guidance on reporting channels. • Practical considerations, including record-keeping, privileged communications, and the interaction between confidentiality obligations and statutory reporting duties. As a statutory review, the outcome of the consultation could result in recommendations for legislative reform, changes to administrative practice or new regulatory guidance.
Resources	tasnima@bhuiyan@mercer.com Identifying issues in tax and corporate whistleblowing frameworks (The Treasury, June 2, 2026)

Australia (new)	
Status	**Consultation is open until August 28, 2026.**
Development	**Wealth** **Consultation on updated prudential governance framework** The Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority (APRA) is in the final phase of its review of the draft prudential standard CPS 510, following publication of governance modernization proposals in March 2025. The consultation is open until August 28, 2026. The standard aims to strengthen and streamline governance expectations across banks, insurers and superannuation trustees. APRA expects to finalize the standard and guidance in late 2026, with implementation from early 2028. Highlights of the proposals include: • Stronger requirements for board governance, conflict management, and the fitness and propriety of directors and senior executives. • Removal of duplicative fit and proper reporting that overlaps with the Financial Accountability Regime reporting (APRA estimates this would eliminate form submissions for around 6,000 individuals). • Greater flexibility by allowing boards to delegate certain requirements that are currently specified in other prudential standards. • Harmonization of governance requirements by combining five existing prudential standards.
Resources	róisín.tuohy@mercer.com Proposed changes to governance (APRA, June 16, 2026)

Australia (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Wealth** **Superannuation bills take effect** Two bills that will impact superannuation are in effect: • The Treasury Laws Amendment (Supporting Choice in Superannuation and Other Measures) Act 2026 supports transition to Payday Super, including amendments to help employers streamline the process for choosing funds during employee onboarding, and prohibits the advertising of certain superannuation products during employee onboarding. The key changes took effect from July 1, 2026. • The Treasury Laws Amendment (Building a Stronger and Fairer Super System) Act 2026, along with the Superannuation (Building a Stronger and Fairer Super System) Imposition Bill 2026 implements the "Division 296 tax" on total superannuation balances exceeding AU$3 million, effective from July 1, 2026.
Resources	tasnima.bhuiyan@mercer.com Treasury Laws Amendment (Supporting Choice in Superannuation and Other Measures) Act 2026 (Legislature, March 26, 2026); Treasury Laws Amendment (Building a Stronger and Fairer Super System) Act 2026 (Legislature, March 13, 2026) and Superannuation (Building a Stronger and Fairer Super System) Imposition Bill 2026 (Legislature, March 13, 2026)

China (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Career — Health** **Employment rights of older workers expanded** On July 1, 2026, Interim Measures on the Protection of Basic Rights and Interests of Over-Age Workers, issued by China's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and other authorities, took effect. From that date, employers who employ certain older workers must enter into formal written agreements setting out employment key terms; currently, statutory protections for such employees are limited. Highlights of the measures include: • Eligible workers are individuals who have reached the statutory retirement age or who had retired early before reaching the statutory retirement age. Currently, the statutory retirement ages are 60 for men (gradually increasing to 63); 55 for female white-collar workers and 50 for female blue-collar workers (gradually increasing to 58). The measures do not apply to employees who have formally opted for flexible delayed retirement under the flexible retirement system. • Mandatory written agreements must specify the scope of work and location; contract term; working hours, rest and leave; remuneration (must not be less than the local minimum wage); social insurance arrangements; and workplace safety and occupational health protection. • Workers must be suitable for their role. Overtime must be remunerated and limited in accordance with statutory restrictions. • Employers must provide training to over-age workers. • Employers must enroll workers in work-related injury insurance, but workers do not contribute to this insurance. • Workers already receiving retirement benefits may continue to do so. They may continue contributing to pension and medical insurance individually or agree with their employer to do so on their behalf. • Disputes relating to wages, safety, and injury insurance are subject to labor arbitration mechanisms. In addition to standard termination grounds, the parties can agree to specific provisions. Employers should review current practices for employing such workers, budget for mandatory work-related injury insurance contributions and ensure they fulfill remuneration and working conditions.
Resources	Interim Measures on the Protection of Basic Rights and Interests of Over-Age Workers (Chinese) (Government, May 10, 2026)

China — Shanghai (new)	
Status	Currently effective
Development	**Health** **Revised medical insurance reimbursement arrangements introduced** Effective May 1, 2026, Shanghai introduced revised medical insurance reimbursement arrangements for insured persons that align with the 11th national centralized drug procurement policy. The notification lists the drugs that are covered, how payments are handled, and other operational measures. Insured persons include both employees and urban/rural residents covered by basic medical insurance. Highlights include: • The drugs covered are those listed in the National Basic Medical Insurance, Maternity Insurance and Work Injury Insurance Drug Catalog (2025) and included in the 11th national centralized procurement. • Reimbursement standards will normally be set by generic name and dosage form. If a drug's sale price does not exceed the reimbursement standard, costs will be shared between the insured person and the medical insurance fund, consistent with existing policy. • If the sale price exceeds the reimbursement standard, the portion up to the standard will be shared between the insured person and the fund, but any excess must be paid by the insured and is treated as out-of-pocket expense. The copayment amount increases if a higher-priced drug is used. • Nonselected manufacturers should be encouraged to set fair prices, and medical institutions should prioritize using drugs priced at or below reimbursement standards. • Primary healthcare institutions should prioritize selected drugs but nonselected drugs can be used as clinically needed. Category B drugs provided by primary care will receive Category A reimbursement (costs within the payment standard covered by insurance, no out-of-pocket for patients) to ensure access and support management of common and chronic conditions. • Medical insurance authorities will monitor drug prices, supply, usage, patient benefits, and fund operations, including prescription monitoring.
Resources	Announcement (Chinese) (Government, April 22, 2026)

China (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Career** • Preferential taxation policy for expatriates expanded — key date: December 31, 2027 • Preferential taxation policy for annual one-time bonus extended — key date: December 31, 2027

China (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Health** • Long-term care insurance scheme introduced — key date: Effective date unknown
Hong Kong (new)	
Status	**Effective January 1, 2027**
Development	**Career — Health** **General holidays for 2027 published** Hong Kong's administration has published a list of statutory public holidays for 2027, to which all employees are entitled. In particular, because the second day of Lunar New Year in 2027 falls on a Sunday, the fourth day of Lunar New Year will be designated as a general holiday. If a statutory holiday falls on a rest day, a holiday should be granted on the day following the rest day which is not a statutory holiday or an alternative holiday or a substituted holiday or a rest day. Employees who have been employed under a continuous contract for no fewer than three months are entitled to holiday pay which is equivalent to the average daily wages earned by the employee in the 12-month period preceding the holiday.
Resources	Statutory holidays for 2027 (Labour Department)

India (new)	
Status	Currently effective
Development	**Wealth** **Revised social security schemes announced** The government has announced revised social security schemes to align with the Code on Social Security, 2020, and further government clarification and guidance is expected. Effective June 29, 2026, the updated schemes are now titled Employees' Provident Funds Scheme, 2026 (PF); Employees' Pension Scheme, 2026 (EPS); and Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme, 2026. Highlights of the key changes include: • For wages exceeding the statutory wage ceiling (currently 15,000 INR per month), the statutory PF contribution remains 12% calculated on 15,000 INR. Employers and employees can contribute above the wage ceiling. Employers can voluntarily match employees' contributions but must pay additional administrative charges on the wages on which voluntary contributions are made. • Damages for the late payment of contributions are now on a monthly slab basis (these are predefined income ranges to which different tax rates apply — 0.25% / 0.50% / 1.00% of arrears per month depending on the duration of default). • Revised employer compliance/reporting include new and updated return and portal obligations (including timely upload of date of exit). The ownership return has been renamed (with corresponding form changes), and requirements for maintaining and updating details of ownership and authorized signatories have been revised (including limits on the number of signatories and periodic updating). • Enhanced contract labor reporting apply to principal employers/contractors, including contractor declarations and monthly electronic reporting within prescribed timelines. • The late fee for delayed returns is 500 INR per day, capped at the administrative charges payable for the month. • Interest is payable up to the date on which the final payment is authorized. • Prior nominations may become invalid where they are inconsistent with the 2026 Scheme. New nominations are now required (including upon an employee's marriage), and the definition of "family/eligible family" is aligned to the Social Security Code. • Full PF withdrawal generally requires 12 months outside of covered employment (increased from the earlier 60-day rule), with specified exceptions (for example, marriage-related resignation for women, retirement, migration abroad, overseas employment). Availability of the EPS "withdrawal benefit" is deferred to 36 months from the last due contribution (or superannuation age, whichever is earlier), increased from the prior 60-day rule.
Resources	ansh.gandhi@mercer.com EPS Scheme, EDLI Scheme, EPF Scheme (Government, June 29, 2026)

India (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Career — Health — Wealth** • Labor codes implemented — Partially effective, but rules need to be issued for some measures

Indonesia (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Career** • Details of public housing savings program, contributions and registration issued — key date: May 20, 2027 **Health** • New insurance regulation for health insurance products issued — key date: Delayed from January 1, 2026

Malaysia (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Career — Health** **Tax incentive for certain employers who implement flexible work arrangements announced** Employers may claim an additional 50% tax deduction for qualifying expenditures on implementing flexible work arrangements, effective for the year of assessment 2025. The incentive was announced in the 2025 Budget and is limited to employers that have not previously claimed deductions for such flexible working implementations. Highlights of the scheme include: • Qualifying expenditure includes capacity development costs (for example, employee training), and purchases of software used to support flexible working. • The expenditure must be a one-time amount greater than 500,000 MYR. • Claims must be verified by The Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad and must be submitted by December 31, 2027.
Resources	Income tax (deduction for the costs of implementation of flexible work arrangements) rules 2026 (Government, June 16, 2026)

Malaysia (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Career** **Expatriate permit changes introduced to boost local employment rate** The Ministry of Home Affairs announced changes to the Employment Pass (EP) requirements that took effect on June 1, 2026. The measures aim to boost the employment of qualified local workers under the Thirteenth Malaysia Plan (RMK-13), and will require companies to review expatriate hiring plans, revise expatriate salary budgets and evaluate the impact on upcoming EP renewals. Highlights include: • The minimum salary thresholds for expatriates applying for all categories of EPs increase by 60% to 100%. The revised minimum salaries are: Category I EP —20,000 MYR; Category II —10,000 MYR to 19,999 MYR; and Category III —5,000 MYR to 9,999 MYR except for manufacturing and manufacturing-related services sector, which are 7,000 MYR to 9,999 MYR. • EPs' duration are fixed at either five or ten years, and the number of permit renewals for which expatriates can apply are restricted. Currently, there is no restriction on the renewal of Categories I and II, and Category III is capped at two renewals. • Expatriates applying for a Category III EP are allowed to bring their dependents (currently, this is restricted to Categories I and II EPs). • Employers that apply for Categories II and III EPs have to introduce in a reasonable timeframe a replacement plan for developing the local workforce to replace expatriate roles. It has to include roles and functions that are transferred to local employees; training; and mentoring and knowledge transfer from expatriates to local workers.
Resources	Notice: Extension of the 1:3 internship policy pilot phase (Ministry of Home Affairs, January 21, 2025) and Revision to employment pass (EP) minimum salary requirements for expatriates (MDEC)

Malaysia (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Health — Wealth** • Expanded social security coverage (LINDUNG 24/7 Scheme) to be introduced — key date: Mid 2026

Singapore (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Health** **New conditions for health plan riders introduced** Changes to Integrated Shield Plan (ISP) riders, intended to help moderate healthcare costs and reduce premium costs, took effect on April 1, 2026. The ISP is a private medical insurance plan offered by private insurers that provides additional medical coverage on top of MediShield Life. Riders are optional add-ons to an ISP that help reduce cash copayments, but premiums typically rise significantly with age and their cost can exceed the base ISP. The sale of noncompliant riders stopped on April 1, 2026, and policyholders who bought riders before this will be moved to riders that meet the new requirements by their next policy renewal after April 1, 2028. Highlights of the changes include: • New rider premiums are lower than legacy rider products — the government estimates up to 30% cheaper. • New riders can no longer cover deductibles set by the Ministry of Health (MoH). • New riders must include a 5% copayment, capped at SG$6,000 per year (up from SG$3,000) excluding the minimum ISP deductible. MoH sets the minimum deductible for each ISP, ranging from SG$1,500 to SG$3,500 per policy year, depending on ward class.
Resources	Announcement (Government, November 26, 2025) and New Integrated Shield Plan Riders (Ministry of Health, May 4, 2026)

Singapore (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Career** **Local Qualifying Salary increased** Effective July 1, 2026, Singapore increased the Local Qualifying Salary (LQS) to SG$1,800, up from SG$1,600, to reflect wage growth. The LQS is the minimum monthly or hourly wage that employers must pay Singaporean or Permanent Resident employees for these workers to count towards the employer's Work Permit or S Pass quota required to hire foreign workers.
Resources	Budget statement: Build a resilient and skilled workforce (Government, February 12, 2026)

Singapore (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Career — Wealth** **Retirement and re-employment age increased** Effective July 1, 2026, Singapore increased its statutory retirement age from 63 to 64 and the mandatory re-employment age from 68 to 69. These changes are part of a phased roadmap toward a retirement age of 65 and re-employment age of 70 by 2030.
Resources	S 187/2026 (Government, April 1, 2026) and S 188/2026 (Government, April 1, 2026)

Singapore (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Career** • Minimum salary requirements for foreign work passes to increase — key date: January 1, 2027 • The Workplace Fairness (Dispute Resolution) Bill passed — key date: End of 2027

South Korea (new)	
Status	**Effective dates vary.**
Development	**Career — Health** **Paternity and child care leave to expand** South Korea will significantly expand paternity and child care leave to encourage greater participation by male employees in child care under measures that take effect on different dates, beginning on August 20, 2026. Highlights of the changes include: • Effective August 20, 2026, working parents will be able to take parental leave more flexibly in blocks of one to two weeks, once per year, for eligible children. Currently, parental leave benefits are only available where leave is taken for at least 30 days. Employees can request this flexible child care leave for reasons prescribed by the Ministry of Employment and Labor, including closures of child care or school facilities, child's vacation or illness (where the child is aged eight years or younger, or in the second grade of elementary school or below. Short-term leave must be taken within the existing statutory child care leave entitlement (that is one year in principle, or up to one year and six months in certain cases). Employers may adjust the timing of leave in consultation with the employee where the requested timing would cause significant disruption to business operations. • Effective September 18, 2026, a new "spousal miscarriage/stillbirth leave" will allow spouses to take up to five days of leave after a miscarriage or stillbirth. The first three days will be paid. • Effective September 18, 2026, paternity leave will be renamed "Spousal Prenatal and Postnatal Leave," Spouses will be allowed to take leave from up to 50 days before the expected delivery date where care for the spouse or fetus is necessary. Currently, the leave must be used within 120 days following the baby's birth. • Effective November 27, 2026, the government will increase the paid portion of the six days of infertility treatment leave to four days, up from two, The maximum benefit amount will be increased to 336,840 KRW, up from 168,420 KRW.
Resources	miyoungkim@mercer.com Information on the measures (Korean) (Government, June 30, 2026)

South Korea (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career — Health

- Paid leave for infertility treatment increased — key date: Six months after promulgation
- Annual leave usage, statutory rest break changed — key date: Six months after promulgation
- Employers prohibited from providing temporary housing structures for foreign workers — key date: Six months after promulgation

Taiwan (new)

Status ⚠ **Currently effective**

Development

Career — Health

Protections against workplace bullying enacted

A new chapter on workplace bullying prevention is now included in Taiwan's Occupational Safety and Health Act that became effective July 1, 2026. Highlights of the measures include:

- Workplace bullying and complaint handling procedures are clearly defined.
- Training and awareness programs for supervisors and employees must be implemented.
- Employers need to initiate prevention and response mechanisms upon becoming aware of, or receiving, a complaint. Employers with 30 or more employees must establish and publicly announce complaint channels, prevention measures and disciplinary standards. After workplace bullying occurs, employers must establish a complaint handling unit, which shall appoint an investigation team with at least three members; external experts must account for at least half of the team, and the representation of any gender must not be less than one-third. Employers with 10 to 30 employees face fewer requirements.
- If the most senior executive, such as the CEO, is implicated, the competent local authority will conduct the investigation.
- Failure to establish the required measures or properly handle workplace bullying incidents may result in penalties ranging from TW$30,000 to TW$750,000. If such incidents lead to occupational diseases or work-related illnesses, penalties may be as high as TW$3 million.

Resources Occupational Safety and Health Act (Ministry of Labor, December 19, 2026)

Taiwan (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career — Wealth

- Employees and employers can negotiate post-retirement age employment — key date: unknown

Thailand (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Health

- Start date of Employee Welfare Fund postponed — key date: October 1, 2026

Vietnam (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Career — Health** **Maternity, paternity leaves increased** Vietnam increased the period of maternity and paternity on July 1, 2026, under measures included in the Law on Population. Women who have a second child are entitled to seven months of leave (up from six months), and male employees are entitled to paternity leave of 10 working days (up from five days).
Resources	Law on Population (Vietnamese) (Government, December 10, 2025)

Section 5

Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA)

European Union (EU) (new)	
Status	**Consultation is open through July 24, 2026.**
Development	**Career — Health — Wealth** **Consultation on guidelines for corporate sustainability due diligence directive** The European Commission issued a public consultation on June 12, 2026, on guidelines that will support implementation of the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). Comments are invited through July 24, 2026. Article 19 of the CSDDD specifies the required scope of the guidelines, which includes practical guidance on conducting due diligence; sector-specific guidance; guidance on assessing risk factors; recommended data sources and digital tools; procedures for information-sharing; and approaches to stakeholder engagement. Although the guidelines will not be legally enforceable, they will help shape the expectations of regulators and companies. The CSDDD — which is due to take effect in July 2029 — sets out due diligence obligations that are largely principle-based and includes examples of "appropriate measures" that companies can adopt. The Commission must adopt guidelines on the due diligence process by July 26, 2027, and further guidelines by July 26, 2028 — this consultation covers both phases.
Resources	Corporate sustainability due diligence — development of guidance (European Commission, June 12, 2026)

EU (new)	
Status	**Must be finalized**
Development	**Career** **Provisional agreement reached on a regulation to enable e-declarations for posted workers** The Council of Ministers and the European Parliament have reached a provisional agreement on a regulation to enable e-declarations for posted workers — employees sent by their employer to provide services temporarily in another European Union (EU) member state. The agreement must be finalized by both institutions before it becomes law. The regulation will digitalize posting declarations and make it easier for national authorities to monitor compliance with the Posting of Workers Directive. The e-declaration system is the first step in the EU's "One Europe, One Market" roadmap and has a deadline of June 2026. The European Labour Authority estimates about 3.6 million postings involving roughly 2.6 million workers in the EU. Highlights of the provisional agreement include: • Member states may opt to use the EU interface instead of national systems. However, if they opt in, they must use it exclusively and cannot require additional national declarations. • The system covers company workers posted to another member state. Member states may also allow third-country service providers to use the public interface when sending workers temporarily. • The European Commission will develop a standard online declaration form and a common set of information requirements. Member states using the standard form may not request additional data, but they can choose not to require all items on the form. • Service providers will be able to upload required posting documents via the system, replacing existing national document submission procedures. Posted workers must be able to receive electronic extracts of their declarations. EU regulations are directly binding across all member states from their date of application, though national law may need adjustment to implement them. The Commission will review the regulation five years after it is implemented into national law.
Resources	Council and parliament agree on digital declaration system for posted workers (Council of the EU, June 23, 2026) and The posting of workers (European Council)

EU (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Career** **Roundup: Employer resources on EU's pay transparency directive** European Union (EU) Directive 2023/970 aims to improve pay transparency, encourage organizations to review their pay structures, and enable individuals to enforce their equal pay rights. Under the directive, employers with 100 or more employees must publish an annual gender pay gap report. Employers are also banned from requesting applicants' salary history before hiring — to strengthen pay transparency and enforcement of equal pay for equal work. For reference purposes, in 2024, the EU's unadjusted gender pay gap averaged 11.1%. "Pay" covers — but is not limited to — salary and all related remuneration, including variable pay and benefits (cash or in-kind), bonuses, overtime, travel, housing and food allowances, training compensation, severance, statutory sick pay, and occupational pensions. The directive's implementation date was June 7, 2026; however, most Member States are at the draft legislation stage or have announced delayed timetables. To provide employers with information on the EU directive and Member States' implementation, this roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles, and viewpoints. The aggregated content in each section is organized in reverse chronological order and is by no means comprehensive.
Resources	Roundup: Employer resources on EU's pay transparency directive (Mercer, regularly updated)

EU (previously covered, with upcoming effective dates)	
Development	**Career** • Gender pay gap reporting to be phased in —key date: June 7, 2027 • Ban on forced or child labor finalized — key date: December 14, 2027 • Revised European Works Council Directive approved — key date: National transposition by January 1, 2028; new rules applicable starting on January 2, 2029. **Career — Health** • Platform Worker's Directive moves forward — key date: December 2, 2026 **Career — Health — Wealth** • Sustainability reporting and due diligence simplification measures agreed upon — key date: 12 months from the date of entry into force of the CSRD and until July 26, 2028, to transpose the CSDDD. **Health — Wealth** • Social security coordination rules revised — key date: Effective date unknown

Belgium (new)	
Status	⚠ **First phase introduced on June 1, 2026; second phase will take effect on January 1, 2028.**
Development	**Career — Health** **Temporary wage indexation introduced in two phases** Starting on June 1, 2026, the Program Law introduced a temporary two-phase wage indexation moderation scheme in Belgium. The second moderation phase will take effect on January 1, 2028. Under the scheme, automatic indexation on the portion of wages exceeding €4,000 gross per month is capped at 2% during each phase. The wage moderation measures, together with a related adjustment to withholding tax exemptions, will affect employer payroll costs and administration. Key features of the scheme include: • The scheme applies to any mechanism that links wages to indexation, including statutory and regulatory provisions, collective employment agreements, and individual contracts. • As of June 1, 2026, a 2% indexation cap applies to monthly salary amounts exceeding €4,000 gross (the salary threshold is prorated for part-time employees). Wages up to €4,000 gross continue to follow the normal indexation rules. Gross salary includes meal vouchers, overtime pay, bonuses, eco vouchers, and night/weekend premiums. • On January 1, 2028, a second moderation period will begin, with the same 2% cap applied to amounts exceeding the indexed €4,000 threshold. • Sector-specific rules apply to wage adjustments effective before June 1, 2026. Most employees normally receive annual indexation on January 1. Sectors that apply indexation in 2026 must apply the cap this year, while sectors without indexation in 2026 will apply it on or after January 1, 2027. • Employers must now pay a temporary social security contribution, known as the temporary wage moderation contribution, to offset the loss of tax and contribution revenue resulting from the partial indexation.
Resources	Program Law (French) (Government, May 30, 2026)

Belgium (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Career** • Mobility Budget required for certain employers starting in 2027 — key date: January 1, 2027 **Career — Health** • Summer deal includes employment measures — key date: Implementing legislation must be agreed upon, and clarification is still required for some measures. • Transportation benefits increased — key date: October 1, 2026 **Wealth** • Blue- and white-collar pension harmonization postponed — key date: January 1, 2027 • Federal government agrees on pension reforms — key date: January 1, 2028

France (new)	
Status	⚠ **Effective September 1, 2026**
Development	**Career — Health** **Physicians must specify employees' sick leave duration** Effective September 1, 2026, physicians must state the duration of an employee's sick leave period — or its extension — on the medical certificate. A decree published on June 13, 2026, sets the maximum duration at 31 days for an initial prescription and 62 days for an extension. These measures are included in the Social Security Financing Act (LFSS) for 2026. Exceptionally, a healthcare professional may prescribe a longer period of leave if justified by the patient's condition and aligned with recommendations from the French National Authority for Health (HAS).
Resources	amandine.marsella@mercer.com Decree No. 2026-498 (French) (Government, June 13, 2026)

France (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Career — Health** **Issuance of sick leave certificates by teleconsultation restricted** On June 27, 2026, France further tightened the rules on issuing sick leave certificates by teleconsultation under its law on combating social security and tax fraud. Under the new rules, a sick leave certificate may be issued via teleconsultation only once, unless the renewal is prescribed by the patient's primary care physician or the patient can show that an in-person consultation is impossible (for example, because of a shortage of medical professionals in the area).
Resources	amandine.marsella@mercer.com Law No. 2026-534 (French) (Government, June 26, 2026)

France (new)	
Status	Currently effective
Development	**Health** **Nurses' scope of practice expanded** Two orders dated June 26, 2026, formalize the expansion and overhaul of nurses' scope of practice, following the Law of June 27, 2025, and the Decree of December 24, 2025. The orders are intended to increase the profession's attractiveness and: • Establish the list of procedures and care services that state-registered nurses may perform; • Establish the list of health products and supplementary tests that they are authorized to prescribe or renew.
Resources	amandine.marsella@mercer.com Order and Order (French) (Government, June 26, 2026)

France (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	Currently effective
Development	**Career — Health** **New paid birth leave introduced** From July 1, 2026, parents working in the private sector in France are eligible for a new paid birth leave of one or two months. This entitlement is part of the Social Security Financing Law for 2026 and applies to children born or adopted from January 1, 2026, onwards. Highlights include: • Each parent may take either one or two months of paid birth leave • This leave can only be taken after the completion of other leave entitlements, such as maternity, paternity, or adoption leave. • The leave is compensated by Social Security through a daily allowance, provided the parent does not work during the leave period. The allowance amounts to 70% of the net salary for the first month and 60% for the second month. • Transitional provisions applied for parents of children born or adopted between January 1 and May 31, 2026, allowing them to use their leave entitlement until the end of 2026.
Resources	ayce.nisancioglutopcan@mercer.com Law 2025-1403 (French) (Government, Dec. 30, 2025)

France (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Career** • Gender quotas for senior executives, management teams imposed — key date: March 1, 2029 **Career — Health — Wealth** • Social security contributions to be payable on long service awards — key date: January 1, 2027 **Health** • Copayment exemption for long-term illness to end — key date: October 1, 2026 • Health insurance system investment and changes to 'key letter AMI' — key date: November 2026

Germany (new)	
Status	⚠ **Upcoming reforms**
Development	**Wealth** **Pension reform recommendations published** The German Government's cross-party Old-Age Commission published its recommendations on June 23, 2026, that could provide more flexibility for occupational retirement plans. Highlights include: • Introduction of a small, universal funded pension provision to supplement the current mainly unfunded state pension. • Expansion of statutory pension insurance coverage to include members of parliament and self-employed individuals. • Gradual increase to the retirement age • Phasing out of "mini-jobs" The government has signaled it intends to move quickly to implement the reforms, subject to parliamentary agreement. Further information will be published when legislative proposals are published.
Resources	Recommendations (German) (Government, June 2026)

Germany (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Wealth** • Corporate tax reductions that will impact company pension schemes introduced — key date: January 1, 2028

Greece (new)	
Status	⚠ **Currently affective**
Development	**Career** **Application of Digital Work Card to more industry sectors expanded** The Ministry of Labor and Social Security has expanded the Digital Work Card (Ergani) application to more industry sectors, including consulting, repair, logistics, water management, and gambling, under a pilot phase until November 15, 2026, with full implementation starting on November 16, 2026. Another pilot phase started on June 2, 2026, for human health activities (hospitals, treatment and diagnostic centers, but excluding doctors) employment support activities; telecommunications; individual service sectors (such as hairdressing salons, beauty salons and dry cleaners); and services provided in buildings and outdoors (such as cleaning services).
Resources	Announcement (Greek) (Ministry of Labor and Social Security, June 2026)

Ireland (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	⚠ **Currently effective**
Development	**Career** **Employees allowed to work beyond contractual age** Effective June 29, 2026, Ireland's Employment (Contractual Retirement Ages) Act 2025 took effect, allowing employees to work beyond their contractual retirement age, and to continue working up until they reach the State Pensions Age (SPA) of 66. Commencement was delayed pending publication of the updated Code of Practice on Longer Working (S.I. No. 246 of 2026) by the Workplace Relations Commission. Employees who want to continue working up to the SPA must notify their employer in writing that they do not consent to retiring at their contractual retirement age, where this is younger than the SPA. Employers must accept an employee's request to work to the SPA, unless they can show an objective, justifiable and legitimate aim, and demonstrate that the means for achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary. Employees can bring a complaint to the Workplace Relations Commission, and the bill includes criminal sanctions for employers that do not comply.
Resources	lorna.white@mercer.com Industrial Relations Act 1990 (Code Of Practice On Longer Working) (Declaration) Order 2026 (Irish Statute book)

Ireland (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Career — Wealth** • Enforcement of contractual retirement ages to be generally restricted — key date: Effective once a ministerial order is issued

Italy (new)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Career** **Fair wage framework introduced** Effective May 1, 2026, Decree Law 62/2026 established a "fair wage" framework in Italy that ties adequate remuneration to collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) rather than to a single statutory minimum wage. The Decree is intended to prevent employers from reducing labor costs by applying low-cost CBAs concluded by less representative organizations, Instead, remuneration must be benchmarked against the National CBAs negotiated by the most representative employer and trade union organizations, regarding the industry sector and principal business activity. Employers cannot apply CBA's lower wage rates where they are lower than those set out in the most representative CBA for the sector. Where no sector-specific CBA exists, employers must adopt the CBA that most closely corresponds to their activities. In addition, employers must record the applicable CBA's unique alphanumeric code on employment contracts and payslips; the Ministry of Labor and other competent authorities use this code to monitor compliance and verify eligibility for regulatory and financial benefits.
Resources	Decree Law 62/2026 (Italian) (Government, April 30, 2026)

Italy (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Wealth** **Termination Indemnity rules revised to increase employees' pension participation** Key changes to the mandatory Termination Indemnity (TFR) system, originally established in Budget Law 2007, were introduced in Law of December 30, 2025, n. 199 (Budget Law 2026). Effective on July 1, 2026, they affect first-time private sector employees by automatically directing their TFR accruals to a pension fund unless they opt-out within 60 days of hiring. Highlights of the measures are: • Starting on January 1, 2026, employers must annually recalculate their workforce size based on the average number of employees in the previous calendar year. The new thresholds are set as follows: 60 or more employees for 2026-2027 (calculated on the 2025 workforce); 50 or more employees for 2028-2031; 40 or more employees from 2032 onwards. If the workforce meets or exceeds the applicable threshold in any year, employers must pay accruing TFR amounts for all employees into a defined contribution (DC) pension scheme (the INPS Treasury Fund) for all future service, even if the workforce later falls below the threshold. • From July 1, 2026, employees have 60 days from their hire date to decide whether to keep their TFR with the company or transfer it to another complementary pension scheme. If no decision is made, the TFR will be allocated automatically to the default pension fund. Employers must inform new employees about their options and the opt-out process at hiring. Under the 2007 rules, they had six months to decide on their TFR accruals.
Resources	giovanna.pezzella@mercer.com Law of Dec. 30 2025, n. 199 (Budget Law 2026) (Italian) (Government, December 30, 2025)

Netherlands (updated)	
Status	**Effective January 1, 2029**
Development	**Wealth** **Senate approves pension lump sum legislation** The Dutch Senate has approved legislation allowing pension savers to withdraw 10% of their pension as a lump sum at retirement. The aim is to provide future retirees with more flexibility and control of their retirement funds.
Resources	bulent.cobanoglu@mercer.com Press release (Dutch) (Government, June 16, 2026)

Netherlands (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Wealth** • Significant reforms to the occupational pension system — key date: Unknown • Deadline extended for transition to new pension system — key date: Deadline extended to January 1, 2028

Oman (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Health — Wealth** **Social protection for foreign employees expanded** Effective in July 2026: • Foreign employees are entitled to work injury and illness benefits paid for by an additional 1% social security contribution, split equally between the employee and the employer. • The end-of-service gratuity paid to foreign employees at the end of their employment is replaced by a contributory savings fund.
Resources	Royal Decree (Arabic) (Government, July 19, 2023)

Oman (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Health — Wealth** • Three workforce insurance schemes postponed — key date: July 19, 2026

Romania (new)	
Status	**Currently effective**
Development	**Career** **Minimum wage increased** On July 1, 2026, the gross monthly minimum wage increased to 4,325 RON, up from 4,050 RON.
Resources	Announcement (Romanian) Government, March 12, 2026)

Romania (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Wealth** • Private pension framework from 2027 revised — key date: January 5, 2027

Slovenia (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Career — Wealth** • Pension reforms will increase retirement age — key date: Beginning in 2028 • Phased retirement introduced, hiring of older employees boosted — key date: Upon proclamation

South Africa (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Career** • Expanded remuneration and pay gap disclosures required — key date: Upon proclamation
Spain (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Career — Wealth** • Flexible retirement options to improve — key date: August 28, 2026
United Arab Emirates (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	**Health** • Unified national health insurance system to be introduced — To be introduced
United Kingdom (UK) (new)	
Status	**First phase will begin on April 6, 2027.**
Development	**Health** **Government to gradually introduce real-time reporting of benefits-in-kind** On June 15, 2026, the government confirmed that mandatory real-time reporting of income tax and Class 1A National Insurance (NI) contributions for most benefits-in-kind (BiKs) and taxable expenses will be introduced over two years. The first phase will commence on April 6, 2027, and the second phase on April 6, 2028. The government had previously postponed the introduction of mandatory payrolling for all BiKs from April 2026 to April 2027. Highlights of the changes include: • From April 6, 2027, mandatory payrolling will apply to company cars, vans, fuel for cars and vans, and employer-provided medical benefits. HMRC will publish draft data item guidance to reflect the removal of 94 real-time information (RTI) data fields for BiKs. • From April 6, 2028, mandatory payrolling will extend to most other BiKs, except for loans and accommodation, which will remain voluntary. • Employers may register for voluntary payrolling from November 2026 for any BiKs not mandated for payrolling from April 2027, including loans and accommodation. • The government stated that the two-phase implementation is intended to support employers and payroll providers in their preparations. It is also considering expanding the voluntary service to permit payrolling of Class 1A NI contributions and will provide further information in due course.
Resources	Mandatory payrolling of benefits in kind and expenses — interim guidance and legislation (HMRC, June 15, 2026)

UK (new)

Status

Consultation is open through September 2, 2026.

Development

Wealth

New surplus flexibility for defined benefit schemes proposed

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is consulting on draft regulations that, from April 2027, would allow trustees and employers to take surplus money out of defined benefit (DB) schemes more easily. Comments are invited through September 2, 2026. The Pensions Regulator has also issued an initial statement to help trustees think about whether to release surplus.

The draft regulations build on changes introduced by the Pension Schemes Act 2026. They aim to give trustees more flexibility to agree to pay surplus to employers while the pension scheme is still running. The government says that these changes would allow surplus to be shared between employers and members, while still protecting members' benefits. The regulations would not change how surplus can be shared with members, or used within the scheme. However, HMRC will consult separately on regulations that would allow trustees to pay surplus directly to scheme members as a lump sum.

Resources

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Surplus flexibilities for defined benefit pension schemes: Unlocking value for employers and scheme members (Government, June 10, 206)

UK (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career — Health

- Introduction of mandatory payrolling of benefits-in-kind postponed — key date: April 2027

Career

- Regulator to apply new rules and guidance on nonfinancial misconduct — key date: September 1, 2026

Wealth

- Significant pension scheme changes enacted — key date: Unknown
- Pension auto enrollment to expand, reducing eligible age and abolishing earnings threshold — key date: Unknown
- Budget includes pension changes — key date: April 6, 2027
- Policy paper on inheritance tax and pensions death benefits — key date: April 6, 2027
- Finance Act 2026 includes framework for inheritance tax on pensions — April 6, 2027

Uzbekistan (new)	
Status	⚠ **Effective dates vary.**
Development	**Career — Health** **Employers no longer pay maternity and certain sick benefits** The responsibility for calculating and paying employees' maternity benefits was transferred from employers to Uzbekistan's State Social Insurance Fund (SSIF) on January 1, 2026, and certain sick leave payments for temporary disability transferred on July 1, 2026. The SSIF may also take on responsibility for paying severance pay from January 1, 2030. These changes are listed in Presidential Decree UP-206, which aims to create a more inclusive and transparent social-protection system. Highlights include: • The new system establishes a unified operational framework for the SSIF, funded by a portion of social tax and insurance contributions. Contributions for mandatory participants are deducted from personal income tax (voluntary payments are available for other categories of workers). • Eligibility for maternity benefits requires workers to have contributed to the SSIF for at least 10 months. The benefit is paid at 75% — 100% of the individual's average monthly salary depending on length of service and is capped at 10 times the minimum wage. The change is intended to support female employment by removing employers' direct liability for maternity payments. • Eligibility for sick pay requires workers to have contributed to the SSIF for at least six months. Sick pay is payable for up to 182 calendar days in a single calendar year. Employers pay for the first five days of sickness and then the SSIF pays.
Resources	Presidential Decree UP-206 (Russian) (Government, May 11, 2026)

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