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SickSlip Data: Advance Requests for Medical Documentation Nearly Doubled Ahead of Grand Theft Auto VI Launch

A physician-led telehealth practice reports an 82 percent rise in advance requests dated for launch day, concentrated among patients under 35 and running at roughly twice the pace of national influenza activity. Its founder says the one-day doctor's-note requirement, not the gamer, is the problem.

WEST HOLLYWOOD, Calif., November 19, 2026 — SickSlip, a physician-led telehealth practice that issues medical documentation following an online clinical evaluation, today released data on the week leading up to the launch of Grand Theft Auto VI. In the three days before the release, requests placed days in advance for documentation covering Thursday, November 19 ran 82 percent above a normal week. Total volume for Monday through Wednesday rose 29 percent on the same days of the prior week.

ADVANCE REQUESTS

+82%

Documentation requested days ahead, dated to cover Thursday, November 19

FIRST-TIME PATIENTS

+45%

Among patients under 35. Patients 35 and over: down 5 percent

LENGTH OF ABSENCE

+38%

Two- and three-day absences. One-day absences: up 9 percent

What the week before the launch looked like

Monday to Wednesday, November 16 to 18, against the same days of the prior week.

+82%	Requests placed days in advance for documentation covering Thursday, November 19. Nearly double a normal week.
+29%	Total volume. First-time patients under 35 rose 45 percent; patients 35 and over fell 5 percent.
+39%	Requests from men, against 13 percent for women. Gender inferred from first name; see methodology.
+38%	Two- and three-day absences. One-day absences rose 9 percent.
33 / 44	States in which work-related requests rose, led by New York (+67%), Pennsylvania (+52%) and Florida (+42%). California fell 8 percent.
+57%	School and college requests, across every age group.
4 in 10	Work requests citing respiratory illness or influenza, from 1 in 3 the week before.

> *"At SickSlip, requests for Thursday notes made days in advance are up 82 percent, nearly double a normal week. Nobody's committing a crime. They're grown adults being told they need a permission slip to stay home. If this is the week your company decides a one-day absence doesn't need a doctor's signature, the game did some good."*
>
> Adam Z. Kawalek, MD · Founder, SickSlip · Board-certified internal medicine physician

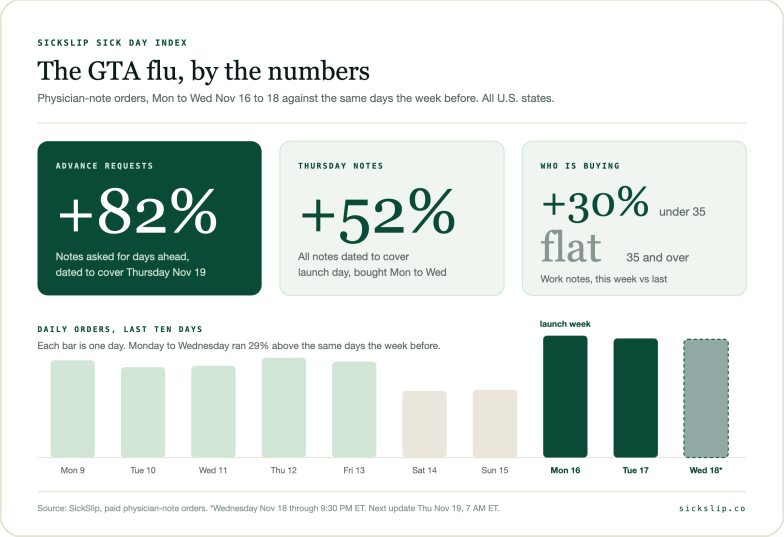

Chart 1 of 3: The GTA flu, by the numbers. Full-resolution files at sickslip.co/press. Reproduce with credit to SickSlip.

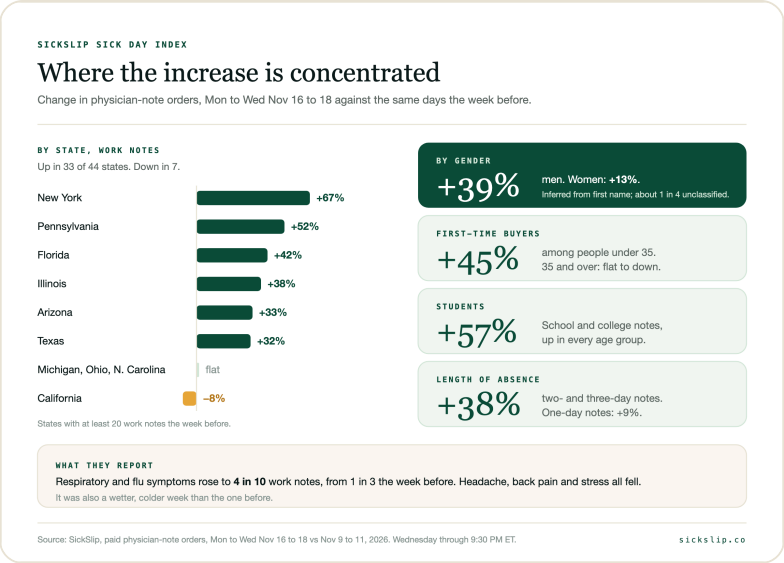

Chart 2 of 3: Where the increase is concentrated.

Comparison with national influenza and COVID-19 activity

In the CDC's most recent published week, ending November 7, influenza was rising and COVID-19 was flat. SickSlip's volume the following week rose at twice that pace, almost entirely among patients under 35 and faster among men than women. Influenza does not select by age or sex.

WEEK-OVER-WEEK CHANGE	CHANGE
CDC: outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (2.8% to 3.2%)	+14%
CDC: influenza tests positive (9.1% to 11.3%)	+24%
CDC: COVID-19 tests positive (3.7% to 3.3%)	down
SickSlip: all documentation requests	+29%
SickSlip: first-time patients under 35	+45%
SickSlip: requests from men (women +13%)	+39%

CDC figures: FluView and NREVSS, week ending November 7, 2026. SickSlip figures: November 16 to 18 against November 9 to 11.

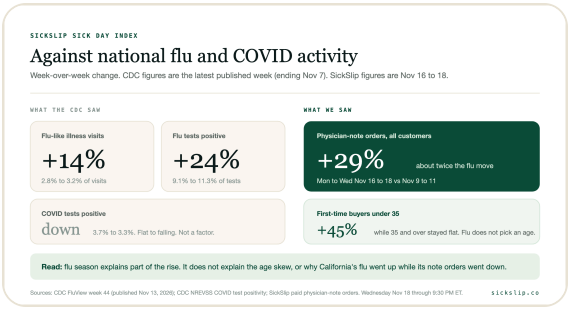

Chart 3 of 3: Against national flu and COVID activity.

What an employer may require

Many employees do not need documentation for a single day's absence. Where a state has a paid sick leave statute, an employer may generally request it only after several consecutive days away, and may not ask the diagnosis. Full guide, checked against each statute: sickslip.co/sick-leave-laws.

STATE	DOCUMENTATION MAY BE REQUIRED
New York	Not for fewer than 3 consecutive scheduled workdays
New Jersey	3 or more consecutive days
Massachusetts, Washington, Oregon	More than 3 consecutive days
Minnesota	More than 2 consecutive days
Connecticut, Illinois	Not at all for statutory sick leave
Texas, Florida, Georgia (no statute)	Employer policy governs

> *"Nobody ever got better by handing in a piece of paper. The GTA flu is a joke and everyone knows it. The part that isn't a joke is a system where a grown adult has to pay a doctor to prove they stayed home for a day. That's the thing worth fixing."*
>
> Dr. Kawalek

> *"Most people who come to SickSlip don't want a doctor's note. They want to be left alone for a day. In a lot of states the law already agrees with them. HR just hasn't caught up."*
>
> Dr. Kawalek

Updated figures follow Thursday evening and Friday morning. Full analysis: sickslip.co/gta6.

ABOUT SICKSLIP

SickSlip is a physician-led telehealth practice founded in 2026 by Adam Z. Kawalek, MD, a board-certified internal medicine physician licensed in 46 states. Since March 2026 it has issued more than 21,000 pieces of medical documentation, counting only documents issued and not revoked, to patients in 44 states.

Every request is screened against physician-written clinical criteria and issued under a licensed physician's authority, only when the reported symptoms support it. The median request is issued within 18 minutes. Every document carries an employer-checkable verification code. Trustpilot 4.8 of 5 (259 reviews); Google 5.0.

METHODOLOGY

SickSlip's own records of paid requests, by the day placed in Eastern time, November 16 to 18, 2026 against November 9 to 11. Wednesday through 9:30 PM Eastern. Age from date of birth. Gender inferred from first name where it could be classified; about one request in four is unclassified and excluded from that comparison. States with at least 20 work-related requests in the comparison week. Percentages, not counts. Underlying tables available to journalists on request.

MEDIA CONTACT

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MEDIA KIT

This release, three charts, logo and founder headshot:
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