

## Workplace illnesses down, injuries unchanged

In November the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, an agency of the United States government) reported on nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses.

That report:

- Uses estimates from a survey of employers, not actual counts.
- Relies on OSHA requirements that employers record injuries and illnesses.
- Omits many employers.
- Covers the year 2023, over a year ago.

Key bits of news from the report:

- The numbers remained high with 2.6 million nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses in 2023.
- The overall numbers moved in the direction we want, down 8.4% from 2022.
- Much of the improvement resulted from illnesses dropping by over half, mostly from a 72.6% decrease in respiratory illness.
- Even after that big drop, respiratory illness cases (which presumably included COVID-19 cases) remained ten times as high as before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Respiratory cases in 2023 totaled almost as much as all illnesses in pre-pandemic 2019.
- If we exclude illnesses and look only at injuries in the private sector, "the total injury cases (2,368,900) were essentially unchanged from 2022."

The report does not mention the most important question about this data: *Why* do these workplace injuries and illnesses happen?



## Workplace illnesses down, injuries unchanged

In November the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, an agency of the United States government) reported on nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses.

That report:

- Uses estimates from a survey of employers, not actual counts.
- Relies on OSHA requirements that employers record injuries and illnesses.
- Omits many employers.
- Covers the year 2023, over a year ago.

Key bits of news from the report:

- The numbers remained high with 2.6 million nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses in 2023.
- The overall numbers moved in the direction we want, down 8.4% from 2022.
- Much of the improvement resulted from illnesses dropping by over half, mostly from a 72.6% decrease in respiratory illness.
- Even after that big drop, respiratory illness cases (which presumably included COVID-19 cases) remained ten times as high as before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Respiratory cases in 2023 totaled almost as much as all illnesses in pre-pandemic 2019.
- If we exclude illnesses and look only at injuries in the private sector, "the total injury cases (2,368,900) were essentially unchanged from 2022."

The report does not mention the most important question about this data: *Why* do these workplace injuries and illnesses happen?

