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Statement from Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis on reported decline in workplace injuries and illnesses

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics [today announced](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/osh.nr0.htm) (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/osh.nr0.htm>) that nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses among private industry employers declined in 2010 to a rate of 3.5 cases per 100 equivalent full-time workers, down from a total case rate of 3.6 in 2009. Nearly 3.1 million injuries and illnesses were reported among private sector industry employers in 2010, down from 3.3 million reported in 2009. Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis issued the following statement:

“We are encouraged by the reported decline in incidence rates for workplace injuries and illnesses, which is reflective of the joint effort of government, business, unions and other organizations. Nevertheless, 3.1 million injuries and illnesses in the workplace is too high. Serious injuries and illnesses can knock a working family out of the middle class. Workers should not have to sacrifice their health and safety to earn a paycheck.

“We remain concerned that more workers are injured in the health care and social assistance industry sector than in any other, including construction and manufacturing, and this group of workers had one of the highest rates of injuries and illness at 5.2 cases for every 100 workers. The Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration will continue to work with employers, workers and unions in this industry to reduce these risks.

“Illness and injury rates for public sector workers also continue to be alarmingly high at 5.7 cases for every 100 workers, which is more than 60 percent higher than the private sector rate. We must continue to work with state and local governments to ensure the safety of our public employees.

“A report like this also highlights the importance of accurate record keeping. Employers must know what injuries and illnesses are occurring in their workplaces in order to identify and correct systemic issues that put their workers at risk. We are concerned with poor record-keeping practices and programs that discourage workers from reporting injuries and illnesses. That’s why OSHA is working hard to ensure the completeness and accuracy of these data, which are compiled by the nation’s employers.

“As our economy continues to rebound and grow, we must ensure that safety and health are a part of that growth. Let’s all remember that no job is a good job unless it is also a safe job.”

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