Pandemic After-Effects: Infectious Disease Risk Beyond COVID Stats and Facts

FACTS

- **Airborne Transmission in Shared Spaces:** Infectious diseases can spread through respiratory droplets and aerosols in poorly ventilated indoor work environments.
- **Close Contact Exposure:** Tasks requiring close interaction increase the risk of transmission of respiratory and communicable illnesses.
- **Surface Contamination:** Frequently touched surfaces such as tools, equipment, and shared workstations can transfer infectious agents between workers.
- **Presenteeism (Working While Sick):** Workers attending work while ill increase exposure risk to others and accelerate workplace transmission.
- **Inadequate Hygiene Practices:** Poor hand hygiene and improper sanitation of shared items contribute to the spread of infectious diseases.
- **Ventilation and Air Quality Issues:** Insufficient airflow and lack of proper ventilation systems increase the concentration of airborne pathogens.
- **Fatigue and Reduced Immunity:** Long shifts, stress, and fatigue can weaken immune response, making workers more susceptible to infection.

STATS

- In the United States, **work-related exposure to infectious diseases remains a recognized occupational hazard**, particularly in healthcare, childcare, and service industries (CDC/NIOSH, 2021–2024).
- U.S. data shows that respiratory infections continue to

cause significant workplace absenteeism each year, impacting operations and worker safety (CDC, 2022–2024).

- In Canada, c**ommunicable diseases are a leading cause of workplace illness claims in certain sectors**, especially healthcare and education (Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada, recent years).
- U.S. reports indicate that outbreaks of influenza, RSV, and other respiratory illnesses continue to affect workplaces beyond COVID-19, leading to operational disruptions (CDC surveillance data, 2022–2024).
- In Canada, **workplace outbreaks of infectious diseases continue to be reported in congregate settings**, including childcare, long-term care, and industrial workplaces (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2021–2024).