



## New Hampshire Leadership

### *Making a Difference to Prevent Falls*



#### Did you know...?

Every year in the United States, one in four older adults fall resulting in serious issues such as broken bones and head injuries. The numbers of those dying from falls continues to grow nationally but **falls are not a normal part of aging and you can do something to prevent future falls.**

#### New Hampshire Falls Facts

- Falls are the leading cause of accidental death in older adults (ages 65+) with 249 deaths occurring in 2020.<sup>i</sup>
- 12,962 older adults went to the emergency department and 4,320 older adults were admitted to the New Hampshire hospitals in 2019 for fall related injuries.<sup>ii</sup>
- Costs for these hospital and emergency department visits exceeded \$294 million.<sup>iii</sup>

Losing a loved one to death from a preventable fall is a tragedy. Unfortunately, deaths are only the tip of the iceberg. Many more are injured resulting in life altering consequences for themselves and their families.

New Hampshire is one of the top three states in the country with the oldest populations. As this group continues to live, work, play and retire in New Hampshire we can expect the impact of falls to drain resources for families and increase healthcare costs.

#### What can be done?

There are several ways to help decrease the risk of falling. Proven community based programs provide strategies and exercise to help older adults remain active. Two such programs offered in NH are a Matter of Balance and Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance®. Contact the NH Falls Prevention HUB at 603-653-3415 or email [Falls.Prevention@Hitchcock.org](mailto:Falls.Prevention@Hitchcock.org) to learn where programs are being held and how you can participate.

New Hampshire is taking action to prevent falls through the following initiatives:

- New Hampshire continues to host one of the oldest falls prevention statewide coalitions in the country called the NH Falls Task Force. The Task Force meets monthly and all are welcome.

- Integrating falls screening in community health centers, community organizations and primary care practices.
- Sponsoring an annual conference and three 1-hour educational sessions over the course of the year on the latest fall prevention research and initiatives for professionals. Please contact us for a copy of this year's presentations. Promoting evidence based falls prevention programming. In New Hampshire we are highlighting two programs proven to reduce falls and decrease fear of falling called Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance® and A Matter of Balance. The Task Force has collaborated with the Foundation for Healthy Communities, the Dartmouth Health Centers for Health and Aging and public health networks to support these programs with grant funding.
- Collaborating with the Dartmouth Health's Injury Prevention Center to host a website with information for older adults, caregivers and professionals. In addition to information and resources for older adults, caregivers and professionals, the web site features an interactive map to locate falls prevention programs and a self-screen to assess risk at [www.nhfalls.org](http://www.nhfalls.org) . Collaborating with Dartmouth Health Centers for Health and Aging to provide a falls prevention network hub to coordinate referrals from healthcare providers, community balance screens and older adults into evidence based programs.

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Sources:

<sup>i</sup><http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>

<sup>ii</sup> New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services, Injury Prevention Program, NH Hospital Discharge Data Set (HDDS)

<sup>iii</sup> New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services, Injury Prevention Program, NH Hospital Discharge Data Set (HDDS)