Iowa Falls Facts and Trends

- Injuries and deaths from falls have risen 20% over the last decade in Iowa.
- For all age groups, falls are the second leading cause of injury deaths in Iowa and the leading cause of death in those aged 65 and older, with the highest rates in those over the age of 84.
- From 2008-2012, age-adjusted death rates due to unintentional falls in Iowa were greater than the national average (9.4 vs. 7.8 per 100,000, respectively).
- From 2008-2012, unintentional falls constituted the leading cause of injury deaths (434 avg. per year), surpassing motor vehicle crashes (373 avg. per year).
- Falls are the leading cause of injury hospitalizations and emergency visits in Iowa, with rates of 176.7 and 2,122.1 per 100,000 respectively.
- With age, there is an increase in the proportion of patients needing care that includes rehab, long-term care or skilled nursing.
- The average cost of a fall-related hospitalization in Iowa is $25,605 for someone aged 65 or older.
- The total cost of fall injury hospitalizations in IA for age 65 or older from 2008-2012 was $94,501,635.

Fall Deaths are Only the Tip of the Iceberg

Falls are a significant concern for Iowans, especially with Iowa’s growing aging population. Iowa’s estimated 2012 age 65 and older population is 470,305 or 15% of the state’s total population. The projected population age 65 and older in Iowa in the year 2030 is 663,186 or 22.4 % of the state’s total population at that time. In 2012, Iowa ranked 9th in the percentage of population age 65 and older and by 2030, it is projected that Iowa will rank 12th.
Iowa Responds

Falling is NOT an inevitable result of aging. Through evidence-based interventions, practical lifestyle adjustments, and community partnerships, we can substantially reduce the number of falls. Iowa is taking action to prevent falls through the following initiatives:

- The Iowa Fall Prevention Coalition concept was initiated during an Iowans Fit for Life (CDC Nutrition and Physical Activity Program to Prevent Obesity and other Chronic Diseases) older adult work group meeting in 2010. Iowa is one of the few states to have this type of workgroup as part of the Fit for Life project, comprised of public health, business, education, community, and the aging network partners.
- In 2011, the Iowa Fall Prevention Coalition was established, including members from state and local aging and public health agencies, health care organizations, insurance industry, and the public. They have made the following accomplishments
  - Established the coalition infrastructure and goals
  - Sponsored a statewide summit
  - Planned and sponsored annual events for Falls Prevention Awareness Day since 2010
  - Issued policy briefs and press releases on fall prevention
  - Sponsored webinars to educate community professionals on resources for fall prevention.

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Iowa Fall Prevention Webpage: http://www.idph.state.ia.us/fallprevention/

Sources:
Iowa Department of Public Health Vital Records and Hospital Discharge Data databases (2012)

Developed by the National Council on Aging The National Council on Aging is a nonprofit service and advocacy organization with headquarters in Washington, DC. The NCOA is a national voice for older Americans – especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged – and the community organizations that serve them. For more information, please visit www.ncoa.org