Did you Know...every year in the U.S., more than 1/3 of adults age 65+ have a fall, with approximately 1/3 of fallers sustaining an injury? Research indicates that people who fall are 2-3 times more likely to fall again, and each fall increases the likelihood of more serious injury or death.

Massachusetts Falls Facts
- In 2008 approximately 83% of fall fatalities were among residents 65 years and older. Among residents 65 years and older, fall fatality rates increase exponentially with age.
- For the 9-year period from 2000 through 2008, the crude fall death rate among Massachusetts older adults increased 150% (from 17.9 to 44.8 per 100,000).
- In 2010, 14.3% of Massachusetts adults ages 65 and older reported at least one fall in the past 3 months. Of these, 34.6% were injured as a result of the fall.
- Falls are the leading cause of traumatic brain injuries (TBI) in Massachusetts. Residents ages 65 and older have the highest rates of TBI-related death and inpatient hospitalization.
- In Massachusetts, hospital charges for fall-related visits among older adults totaled over $625 million dollars in FY2009.
- While only 11% of older adults treated in an acute care hospital for fall-related injuries in FY2009 sustained a hip or femur fracture, these cases accounted for nearly one-third (32%) of all hospital charges for fall-related injuries ($200 million).

Fall Deaths are Only the Tip of the Iceberg

Sources: Registry of Vital Records and Statistics, MA Department of Public Health (2008); MA Hospital Discharge, MA Emergency Department Discharge, and MA Observation Stay databases, MA Division of Health Care Finance and Policy (2009).

As the population ages, the impact and cost of fall-related deaths and injuries will increase dramatically unless funding is increased to address the issue. The Massachusetts population over 65 years of age is expected to increase from 13.5% in 2000 to 20.9% in 2030.
Massachusetts 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. Massachusetts is taking action to prevent falls through the following initiatives:

- A Massachusetts Department of Public Health Falls Prevention Coalition was formed in January 2007 as a committee of the Massachusetts Injury Community Planning Group (now known as the Massachusetts Prevent Injuries NOW! Network).
- Coalition membership has expanded significantly to over 50 organizations and individuals, including hospital and nursing home administrators, vision specialists, pharmacists, rehabilitation professionals, physicians, insurers, advocates, seniors and others. Two symposia were hosted in May and November 2007, devoted to community-based interventions.
- The First Statewide Falls Prevention Symposium was held in May 2008, attended by more than 800 providers, legislators, seniors and interested public health professionals from across New England.
- Massachusetts remains committed to broadening our reach to seniors and to raising our own visibility as providers of sound advice and practical, working programs to older adults and to the healthcare community in our state.

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DPH Falls Prevention Information line:  
1-800-227-SAFE (7233)

Websites:

www.masspinn.org  
http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/wellness/injury-prevention/falls.html (this webpage links to a number of resources, including an extensive 2008 report on unintentional older adult falls in Massachusetts)

Sources:
Massachusetts Department of Public Health. (2008). Unintentional Fall-Related Injuries Among Massachusetts Older Adults.  
Registry of Vital Records and Statistics, MA Department of Public Health (2008); MA Hospital Discharge, MA Emergency Department Discharge, and MA Observation Stay databases, MA Division of Health Care Finance and Policy (2009).

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