Goal and Objectives

The NH Falls Task Force goals are to reduce the rate of death and disability in older adults due to falls, reduce the risk of falling in older adults, to educate and train professionals working with the older adults, and raise public awareness that falls are not a normal part of aging.

The coalition objectives include:

- The Falls Risk Reduction Task Force will continue to lead collaborative efforts to coordinate falls risk reduction efforts on a statewide basis.
- Increase the proportion of health care professionals and others serving older adults who are trained in falls risk reduction based on best practice standards
- Encourage falls screening and appropriate referrals and follow up for every NH resident 65 years of age and older at all points of entry into the health care system.
- Establish a statewide resource network of evidence based falls prevention programs within healthcare and community settings.
- Educate older adults that falls can be prevented and falls risk can be reduced.
- Support and disseminate the collection and linking of multiple data sets relevant to understanding, preventing and evaluating efforts related to older adult falls.

History of the Coalition

In 1999, a New Hampshire injury surveillance report was released, indicating that the rate of falls deaths, hospitalizations, and emergency department visits in the elderly (65 and older) population, unlike other injury causes, had either stayed the same over time or gone up. The New Hampshire Falls Risk Reduction Task Force (Task Force) was organized soon after that to address the report’s concerns. Originally facilitated by the state's Osteoporosis Prevention Program, the leadership soon changed hands to the state's Injury Prevention Program. With an electronic membership of over 300 professionals statewide, the Task Force is made up of a variety of disciplines, all working with the elderly, and all sharing a commitment to reducing the risk and numbers of falls among New Hampshire's oldest citizens. Meeting on a monthly basis (approximately 10-20 "regulars" attend), the Task Force has accomplished a lot in its sixteen-year history. From an early review of the literature and development of "Slips, Trips, and Falls, Prevent Them..."
All”, an educational program for seniors to its latest endeavors, advocating routine falls screening in primary care practices and promoting evidence based programs for older adults, the work of the Task Force has covered the gamut of falls risk reduction work. The Task Force joined the National Falls Free® Coalition early in the Coalition's existence and has continued to promote strategies of the National Action Plan.

Lead Organizations
Organizations that are playing a key role in the coalition include:

- New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services
- Injury Prevention Center at Children's Hospital at Dartmouth-Hitchcock (CHaD)
- Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center

Key Partners
- Dartmouth Centers for Health and Aging
- Foundation for Healthy Communities
- Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services

Measured Outcomes
- Deaths, hospitalizations, ED visits due to falls
- 911 calls due to falls
- EMS runs due to falls
- Dissemination of Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance and A Matter of Balance fall prevention programs

Key Successes
- Task Force is collaborating with the Foundation for Healthy Communities (FHC) and the Dartmouth Centers for Health and Aging (DCHA) to increase evidence-based falls prevention programs throughout the state through two ACL implementation grants. These efforts promote screening for older adult fall risk and expand participation in a Matter of Balance (MOB) program.
- Northern New England Geriatric Education Center
- Many state hospitals, VNAs, and long term care facilities who donate staff time to attend meetings and facilitate projects
- New Hampshire Public Health Networks

Structure
The Task Force is co-led by representatives from the Injury Prevention Center at CHaD and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. Meetings are traditionally held the first Tuesday of the month at the Department of Health and Human Services located in Concord.

Collaborating with the Dartmouth Centers for Health and Aging, the Task Force has enhanced the NH Falls Task Force website by including a self assessment screening (STEADI Stay Independent Questions) and provided interactive maps to identify where evidence based programs are being held and the contact information at each site.

Collaborated with DCHA and NH Task Force members to produce Tomie DePaola video for 2015 Falls Awareness Day. The video won 2nd place in a national NCOA competition. The video has been shown at statewide conferences and is on the NH Falls Task Force website. It educates older adults how to decrease fall risk.
The Task Force is collaborating with partners to increase falls screening in NH. These efforts include meeting with ServiceLink and previously with Community Health Centers to add three AGS falls screening questions into their older adult screening. The Dartmouth Centers for Health and Aging through their ACL grant is implementing community based screening using the STEADI and training primary care providers in the use of STEADI based screening throughout the state. The Task Force will continue to collaborate with partners in screening efforts.

We continue to offer an annual conference for fall prevention professionals.

Evidence-Based Programs Offered

- Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance
- A Matter of Balance

Workgroups or Local Coalitions Supported

- Public Health Networks

Major Funding Sources

- The Task Force has no direct funding sources. Members’ sponsoring organizations donate their time and other in-kind contributions.
- We have received limited funding for coalition support from the Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services
- Grant support from Dartmouth Centers for Health and Aging
- Grant support from Foundation for Healthy Communities

Website(s)

- www.NHFalltaskforce.org

Coalition Lead Contact Information

For additional information, contact:

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