**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.

**New Hampshire Falls Facts**

- Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of injury death. On average, more than 100 older people die each year in New Hampshire as a result of a fall.
- Deaths due to falls are 60% of all injury-related deaths.
- In one year, there are over 3,000 older adults in the state hospitalized on average due to falls; more than 80% could not return home or live independently.
- Total approximate costs for New Hampshire hospitalizations (inpatient and emergency dept.) in 2009 were $109.2 million dollars.
- In 2009, the average charge for an emergency department visit for NH residents age 65 and older due to fall-related injury was $2,691. Average charges for an inpatient stay were $26,112.

**Fall Deaths are Only the Tip of the Iceberg**

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. In 2010, one third of NH’s population was aged 50 years and older. As a result of the aging of the Post-WWII “baby boomer” generation, the number of adults over age 50 will increase over the next several decades.
New Hampshire 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. New Hampshire is taking action to prevent falls through the following initiatives:

- The New Hampshire Falls Risk Reduction Task Force (Task Force) was organized soon after the release of the 1999 New Hampshire injury surveillance report that indicated that the rate of falls deaths, hospitalizations, and emergency department visits among older adults (65 and older) had remained consistent or increased over time. It is the country’s oldest functioning statewide task force on older adult falls.
- Integration of a falls screening in community health centers participating in state funding through the Federal Title V Block Grant.
- Facilitation of training for health care professionals on how to do fall risk screenings and assessments within the primary care setting according to national guidelines.
- Annual conferences on the latest in falls research and practice. 2011’s conference, “Community Dwelling Older Adults and Falls: Understanding Fear of Falling to Prevent Falls”.
- Completion of a year-long evaluation of coalition infrastructure and functioning; now beginning to implement some recommended changes.
- "You Can Reduce Your Risk of Falling", a health communications campaign designed to increase older adults self-efficacy with respect to falls. This campaign includes different types of signage including public service announcements.
- "Slips, Trips and Falls, Prevent Them All", a curriculum geared towards the older adult that can be facilitated community wide.
- “Best Practice, Falls Risk Reduction Project” with 20 teams across the state for a two-year learning collaborative.
- Collaborative data project with E-911 to look at the nature and number of calls related to falls.
- Falls/Fire project with the State Fire Marshal, Concord Regional Visiting Nurse Association, and the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services on the value of joint collaboration in community based prevention. Sessions have been facilitated all across the state.

Contact Information

Rhonda Siegel  
Injury Prevention Program  
New Hampshire Dept of Health & Human Services  
29 Hazen Drive  
Concord, NH 03301  
Phone: (603) 271-4700  
RSiegel@dhhss.state.nh.us  

For additional information, visit the New Hampshire Falls Risk Reduction Task Force website at www.nhfallstaskforce.org

Sources:  

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