

Tennessee

Making a Difference to Address Falls Prevention



Did you Know... every year in the United States, more than 1/4 of adults age 65+ have a fall, with approximately 1/5 of fallers sustaining a serious 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.

Tennessee Falls Facts

- 15% of the Tennessee's population is age 65 or older. Tennessee has 990,044 older adults.
- Falls are the leading cause of unintentional injury death among Tennessee's adult residents 65 years and older. From 2010 to 2014, fall-related deaths among older Tennessee adults 18%.
- Every year, one-third of adults age 65+ have a fall, with approximately one-third of fallers sustaining injuries such as hip fractures and traumatic brain injuries. More than 50% of hip fractures in Tennessee are caused by falling.
- Nationally the direct medical costs for fall injuries are \$34 billion annually. In Tennessee, the average estimated medical cost of a fall-related hospitalization is over \$47,000, which amounted to over \$835 million in public and private health care spending in 2013.

Fall Deaths are Only the Tip of the Iceberg

- Annual number of deaths from falls: 642
- Annual number of hospitalizations from falls: 17,861
- Annual number of emergency department visits from falls: 211,939

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.

Tennessee Responds

Falling is NOT an inevitable result of aging. Through evidence-based interventions, practical lifestyle adjustments, and capacity-building to address falls prevention through community partnerships, we can

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substantially reduce the number of falls. Tennessee is taking action to prevent falls through the following initiatives:

- In 2010, the Tennessee Department of Health established a statewide Tennessee Fall Prevention Coalition. Local coalitions are active in Knoxville and Chattanooga. A combined total of over 200 partners currently participate in the three groups.
- Since 2012, the Tennessee Governor has issued a proclamation designating the first day of fall as Falls Prevention Awareness Day. Over 100 organizations annually participate in various events to raise awareness and screen older adults for fall risks.
- In 2014, The Tennessee Department of Health conducted a Fall Prevention Conference attended by 120 participants from throughout the state. Attendees included organizations and individuals representing hospitals, senior care specialist YMCA, universities, local health departments, geriatric education centers, AARP, and others.
- In July of 2014, The Tennessee Health Department contracted with the Wisconsin Institute of Healthy Aging to train 20 Stepping On Leaders to conduct evidence-based fall prevention.
- In August 2014, the Hamilton County conducted the Chattanooga Fall Prevention Summit in Chattanooga, Tennessee attended by over 300 participants, including partners from hospitals, senior centers, nursing homes, city and county governments, and corporate partners. For more information about Fall Prevention Chattanooga, visit the website at <https://fallpreventionchattanooga.com/>
- In July of 2015, The Tennessee Health Department contracted with WIHA to train four Stepping On Master Trainers who subsequently trained 32 other Stepping On Leaders to provide evidence-based fall prevention throughout Tennessee.

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About the Falls Free® Initiative

The National Council on Aging leads the Falls Free® Initiative, a national effort to address the growing public health issue of falls, fall-related injuries and deaths. The initiative includes a 44-member State Coalition on Falls Prevention Workgroup charged with collaboratively promoting effective strategies to address falls. Members are engaged in disseminating proven falls prevention programs, advocating for funding, and educating older adults about how they can reduce their risk of falling. Learn more at www.NCOA.org/FallsFreeInitiative.

Data Source

- Tennessee Department of Health, Division of Policy, Planning and Assessment, Office of Health Statistics.

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