Goal and Objectives

The Mission of the Wisconsin Falls Prevention Initiative is to reduce falls and fall-related complications and deaths among Wisconsin’s older adults through the integration of community based and medical prevention approaches.

The Coalition objectives include:

- Increase education of medical community, frontline staff, care managers, caregivers, and consumers
- Promote continued and successful collaborations between social and medical disciplines that deliver health services and support
- Identify and promote evidence-based health promotion activities and programming statewide.

History of the Coalition

In 1999, Age Advantage (an agency who worked with county aging units in Southern WI) contacted what was then the WI Dept. of Health and Family Services Injury Prevention Section Chief to talk about the magnitude of elderly falls in Wisconsin. After this meeting, additional stakeholders were identified and invited to meet to talk about this problem, to identify activities and resources already in place and to share any other pertinent information. Data was reviewed showing Wisconsin having the second highest rate of deaths from falls in the country at that time. In an effort to reverse the reported trend in CDC data, the Wisconsin Falls Prevention Initiative (FPI) began. A large interdisciplinary statewide coalition evolved to address falls, fall prevention and fear of falling in a systematic manner.

Leadership

- Wisconsin’s Injury Prevention Section (now the Injury and Violence Prevention Program) located within the Department of Health Services Division of Public Health (DHS)
- the State’s Division of Disability and Elder Services Office on Aging (now also in DHS DPH)
- Age Advantage (now part of Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc. one of three Area Agencies on Aging serving 70 counties and 11 tribal aging units)
- University of Wisconsin School of Medicine (MDs) and University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics
Key Partners
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers
- Local Aging Units and Public Health Departments
- Tribal Health Service Providers
- Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging
- Hospitals/Clinics/MCO's
- Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Senior Centers, Assisted Living Facilities and Wellness Centers

Structure
The Adult Injury Prevention Coordinator at the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics serves as facilitator of the Falls Prevention Initiative.

Measured Outcomes
- Partnerships and collaborations
- Implementation of evidence-based health promotion programs and activities
- Implementation of the CDC’s STEADI Toolkit
- Numbers of fall deaths, hospitalizations, emergency dept. visits.

Key Successes
- Heightened awareness regarding the magnitude of the problem across the state as well as within a broad set of organizational entities—this is evident through the ever growing diversity of the list serve.
- Support and coordination of an annual Governor’s proclamation for Fall Prevention Awareness Month with related activities and materials.
- Uptake of the CDC's STEADI toolkit including integration into multiple health systems.

Falls Prevention Programs Offered
- Stepping On
- Tai Chi
- No Falls
- Otago
- Matter of Balance
Workgroups or Local Coalitions Supported

- Local coalitions are invited to attend the FPI and have access to any resources provided through the coalition. To date, multiple local coalition members participate on the FPI.

Major Funding Sources

- Coalition conference call lines are supported by the Injury and Violence Prevention Program at DHS. Minimal webhosting is provided through the DHS website.

Coalition Lead Contact Information

For additional information, contact:

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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.