Wisconsin Falls Facts
- Falls are the leading cause of accidental death among people 65 or older in Wisconsin.
- While the greatest number of fall-related hospitalizations occurred among Wisconsin residents between the ages of 65-84 years, those ages 85 years and older had the highest rate of fall-related hospitalizations (5,712 per 100,000 people) and fall-related emergency department visits (7,157 per 100,000 people).
- Each year, more people 65 or older in Wisconsin die from falls than in motor vehicle crashes.
- 29% of falls resulting in death occur in a nursing home or assisted living facility.
- Over half of falls resulting in death occur in the home.
- In 2008, charges from fall-related hospitalizations and emergency department visits for Wisconsinites ages 65 and older totaled $496 million and government-sponsored insurance programs covered 93% of those charges.
- Nearly two-thirds of people 65 or older, who are admitted to a hospital because of a fall, are discharged afterward to nursing homes.

Fall Deaths are Only the Tip of the Iceberg

Data represents age 65 and older population in Wisconsin

Wisconsin is seeing a significant increase in its numbers of older adults. In 2010, there were 765,006 Wisconsin residents over the age of 65, as compared to 702,588 seen in 2000. This shows a 7.6% increase of the ages 65+ population. As the population ages, the impact and cost of fall-related deaths and injuries will increase dramatically unless this serious public health issue is addressed effectively.
Wisconsin Responds

Falls are NOT a normal part of aging. Through evidence-based interventions, practical lifestyle adjustments, and community partnerships, we can substantially reduce the number of falls. Wisconsin is taking action to prevent falls through the following initiatives:

- Wisconsin’s Statewide Fall Prevention Initiative has garnered active participation across sectors and disciplines. The initiative has 82 active members from across the state, including staff from Aging Disability Resource Centers, public health departments, health plans, local coalitions, non-profits, senior centers, nursing homes and hospitals. Additionally, 24 Wisconsin counties have local fall prevention coalitions.

- Local availability of evidence-based programs to improve balance and prevent falls is growing. In Wisconsin, there are 173 leaders and 47 peer leaders trained and implementing Stepping On courses for adults living in the community; these courses are taking place in 30 Wisconsin counties.

- Healthiest Wisconsin 2020, the state’s blueprint for improving public health, incorporates injury prevention and identifies fall prevention as a priority. By 2020, the plan calls for a reduction in the leading causes of injury and violence through policies and programs that create safe environments and practices and an increase in access to primary, secondary and tertiary prevention initiatives and services that address mental and physical injury and violence. Falls Prevention Among Older Adults: An Action Plan for Wisconsin guides the work specific to falls.

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