

## New Hampshire Leadership

*Making a Difference to Prevent Falls*



**Did you Know...** every year in the United States, one in four older adults fall resulting in serious issues such as broken bones and head injuries. The numbers of those dying from falls continues to grow nationally but falls are not a normal part of aging and you can do something to prevent future falls.

### New Hampshire Falls Facts

- Falls are the leading cause of accidental death in older adults ( ages 65+) with 243 deaths occurring in 2017.<sup>i</sup>
- Some counties in New Hampshire suffer more deaths than others. Three counties with the most fall deaths to older adults were Stafford, Grafton and Coos. Rockingham, Sullivan and Hillsboro had the least deaths.<sup>ii</sup>
- 10,155 older adults went to the emergency department and 2,508 older adults were admitted to the New Hampshire hospitals in 2016 for fall related injuries.<sup>iii</sup>
- Costs for these hospital and emergency department visits exceeded \$144 million.<sup>iv</sup>

Losing a loved one to death from a preventable fall is a tragedy. Unfortunately, deaths are only the tip of the iceberg. Many more are injured resulting in life altering consequences for themselves and their families.

New Hampshire is one of the top three states in the country with the oldest populations. As this group continues to live, work, play and retire in New Hampshire we can expect the impact of this falls to drain resources for families and increase healthcare costs.

### What can be done?

There are several ways to help decrease the risk of falling.

Proven community based programs offered in the community can provide strategies and exercise to help older adults remain active. Two such programs offered in NH are a Matter of Balance and Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance<sup>®</sup>. Go to [www.nhfalls.org](http://www.nhfalls.org) to learn about what is going on in New Hampshire to prevent falls. You can also call the NH Falls Prevention HUB at 603-653-3415 or email [Falls.Prevention@Hitchcock.org](mailto:Falls.Prevention@Hitchcock.org) to learn where programs are being held and how you can participate.

New Hampshire is taking action to prevent falls through the following initiatives:

- New Hampshire continues to host one of the oldest falls prevention statewide coalitions in the country called the NH Falls Task Force. The Task Force meets monthly and all are welcome.
- Integrating falls screening in community health centers, community organizations and primary care practices using the STEADI toolkit. Go to [www.cdc.gov/STEADI](http://www.cdc.gov/STEADI) for more information.
- Sponsor annual conferences on the latest fall research for professionals.
- Promote evidence based falls prevention programming. In New Hampshire we are highlighting two programs proven to reduce falls and decrease fear of falling called Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance® and A Matter of Balance. The Task Force has collaborated with the Foundation for Healthy Communities, the Dartmouth Centers for Health and Aging and public health networks to support these programs with grants.
- Continued development for a website with information for older adults, caregivers and professionals. The web site shows an interactive map to locate programs and the STEADI self-screen to assess risk at [www.nhfalls.org](http://www.nhfalls.org).
- Working to create a falls prevention network hub to coordinate referrals from healthcare providers, community Screens and older adults into evidence based programs

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Sources:

<sup>i</sup> <https://webappa.cdc.gov/cgi-bin/broker.exe>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://wonder.cdc.gov/controller/datarequest/D76;jsessionid=2933956C231CBCF7A3C85BEC5D93D2A3>

<sup>iii</sup> New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Services, Injury Prevention Program, NH Hospital Discharge Data Set (HDDS)

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