

## Facts about Falls

*Every 29 minutes, an older adult dies from a fall; every 15 seconds an older adult is treated in an emergency room for a fall-related injury.*

### The National Challenge

Falls remain the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injury for older Americans. Falls threaten seniors' safety and independence and generate enormous economic and personal costs. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) Injury Center monitors falls, fall-related injuries, and associated costs and reports that:

- In 2009, more than 20,000 older Americans died from injuries related to unintentional falls.
- In 2010, over 2.3 million older Americans were treated in an Emergency Department for nonfatal injuries from falls, and more than 650,000 were hospitalized.
- The death rate from falls among older adults has increased by 55% from 2000 to 2007.
- The total cost of fall injuries for older Americans was estimated to be \$30 billion (in 2010 dollars). By 2020, the annual direct and indirect cost of fall injuries is expected to reach \$54.9 billion.

### Facts about Falls in New Mexico

In New Mexico:

- Falls are the leading cause of injury-related death and hospitalization among adults 65 years and older
- In 2012, the older adult fall related death rate was the 7th highest among all states and was about two times higher than the national rate.
- The 2010 NM Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System reports 18.7% of adults 75+ had fallen at least once during the previous 90 days; 35,400 adults 65+ reported a fall-related injury
- In 2011, only 25.8% of adults 65+ hospitalized for a fall-related injury were discharged to home

The New Mexico Adult Falls Prevention Coalition **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 among older adults. New Mexico is part of the national Falls Free® Initiative, which includes more than 40 states and 70 national organizations, professional associations, and federal agencies across the country dedicated to reducing fall-related injuries and deaths among older adults. For more information, please visit [www.ncoa.org/FallsFreeInitiative](http://www.ncoa.org/FallsFreeInitiative).

## **About the New Mexico Adult Falls Prevention Coalition**

The NMAFPC is composed of professionals who volunteer their services and expertise to represent the public and private sectors. This coalition attempts to implement the strategy of the Falls Free Initiative and National Action Plan. The group has sponsored trainings and speakers on relevant falls prevention topics, and for the past three years, a falls screening booth at the New Mexico State Fair. The group has also supported evidence-based fall prevention programs and provided fall prevention informational tools to various stakeholders. - See more at: <http://www.ncoa.org/improve-health/center-for-healthy-aging/falls-prevention/state-coalitions-map/new-mexico.html>

## **Falls Prevention Awareness Day**

New Mexico is one of 47 states and the national Falls Free® Initiative that declared a statewide **Falls Prevention Awareness Day** on the first day of fall, September 22, 2013, and holding related public activities.

This year's theme, *Preventing Falls—One Step at a Time*, seeks to unite professionals, older adults, caregivers, and family members to play a part in raising awareness and preventing falls in the older adult population.

## **Looking Ahead**

New Mexico continues to pursue the following long-term goals:

- Encourage older adults to adopt healthy behaviors, become more physically active, have their medications reviewed, and make appropriate safety modifications to their homes.
- Encourage health care providers to assess all older patients for fall risk factors.
- Educate and train caregivers and family members in strategies to reduce falls.
- Increase availability of evidence-based falls prevention and physical activity programs in community-based organizations serving older adults.
- Improve mechanisms for health care providers to refer older adults to community-based falls prevention and physical activity programs.
- Empower all individuals to promote falls prevention strategies in their communities.

For more information, please visit [www.ncoa.org/FPAD](http://www.ncoa.org/FPAD) or contact Courtney Cameron, Adult Injury Prevention, Office of Injury Prevention at NMDOH; [Courtney.Cameron@state.nm.us](mailto:Courtney.Cameron@state.nm.us)

## **About the Falls Free® Initiative**

*Led by the National Council on Aging, the Falls Free® Initiative includes more than 40 states and 70 national organizations, professional associations, and federal agencies working collaboratively to bring education, awareness, and evidence-based solutions to local communities. Falls Free® seeks to provide hundreds of thousands of older Americans with the resources and education needed to reduce their risk of injury. For more information, please visit: [www.ncoa.org/FallsFreeInitiative](http://www.ncoa.org/FallsFreeInitiative).*