



Falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for older Americans. Falls threaten seniors' safety and independence and generate enormous economic and personal costs.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- **One-fourth of Americans aged 65+ falls each year.**
- **Every 11 seconds, an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall; every 19 minutes, an older adult dies from a fall.**
- **Falls are the leading cause of fatal injury and the most common cause of nonfatal trauma-related hospital admissions among older adults.**
- **Falls result in more than 2.8 million injuries treated in emergency departments annually, including over 800,000 hospitalizations and more than 27,000 deaths.**
- **In 2013, the total cost of fall injuries was \$34 billion.**
- **The financial toll for older adult falls is expected to increase as the population ages and may reach \$67.7 billion by 2020.**

Falls, with or without injury, also carry a heavy quality of life impact. A growing number of older adults fear falling and, as a result, limit their activities and social engagements. This can result in further physical decline, depression, social isolation, and feelings of helplessness.

However, falling is not an inevitable result of aging. Through practical lifestyle adjustments, evidence-based falls prevention programs, and clinical-community partnerships, the number of falls among seniors can be substantially reduced.

To address the prevention of falls, the Bergen County Department of Health Services Office of Health Promotion is offering the following FREE programs/materials for municipalities that contract with our department for state-mandated health services:

- **A Matter of Balance-Managing Concerns About Falls**—workshop consists of eight two-hour sessions for groups of 10-12 participants. Sessions are held in community sites such as senior centers, senior housing, libraries, etc. The class utilizes a variety of activities to address physical, social, and cognitive factors affecting fear of falling and to learn fall prevention strategies. The activities include group discussion, problem-solving, skill building, assertiveness training, videotapes, sharing practical solutions and exercise training.
- **Falls Prevention** -structured as a 20 minute power point presentation for community groups that focuses on practical strategies to manage falls.
- **Health materials on falls prevention.**

Attached is a flyer promoting the availability of falls prevention programs offered and a fact sheet from the NJ Department of Human Services/Division on Aging regarding the week of September 17-23rd designated as New Jersey Falls Prevention Awareness Week. Please network this information to your personal and professional contacts, particularly those who interact with the elderly.

For more information or to schedule the workshop or one-session presentation, please contact Eric Ciavaglia, Coordinator, Office of Health Promotion at eciavaglia@co.bergen.nj.us or (201) 956- 3476.

In 2008, the Falls Free® State Coalitions on Falls Prevention Workgroup, led by the National Coalition on Aging, requested that a national Falls Prevention Awareness Day (FPAD) be observed on the first day of fall. The 10th annual *Falls Prevention Awareness Day (FPAD)* will be observed on Sept. 22, 2017—the first day of fall. In honor of this notable milestone, the theme of the event will be “10 Years Standing Together to Prevent Falls.” For more information on Falls Prevention Awareness Day, visit <https://www.ncoa.org/healthy-aging/falls-prevention/falls-prevention-awareness-day/>.

In observance of Falls Prevention Awareness Day and/or New Jersey Falls Prevention Awareness Week, the Office of Health Promotion encourages you to take advantage of the free health promotion programs and resources specifically designed for the elderly.