

AoA Older Americans Month 2008 Program Champion



Project: Minnesota Falls Prevention Initiative

Organization: Minnesota Board on Aging

Project Description

Keep Minnesotans Right Side Up!

Falls can happen anytime, anyplace and to anyone. Falls are particularly serious in Minnesota, which ranks fourth among the states in the number of fall-related deaths - about twice as many per capita as the national average. The increasing incidence of falls among older adults and deaths related to those falls is anticipated to grow as the population ages.

Action is being taken to keep Minnesotans right side up and tackle this serious public health concern. The Minnesota Board on Aging and the Minnesota Departments of Health and Human Services are working together with several public and private organizations to reduce the number of falls and fall-related injuries. The goals of the Minnesota Falls Prevention Initiative are to increase awareness; encourage assessment of an individual's risk of falling; and to promote evidence-based interventions to reduce falls and fall-related injuries.

The Minnesota Falls Prevention website (www.mnfallsprevention.org) is a first step in increasing awareness. This easy-to-navigate website offers useful information for older adults and their family members on the actions they can take to prevent falls and remain independent. The website also offers information for professionals (Area Agency on Aging, public health, physicians, nurses, social workers, physical therapists, occupational therapists) who work with older adults.

The MN Council of Health Plans has facilitated a coordinated program improvement project (PIP) focused on falls prevention involving all health plans serving older adults in MN. The PIP involves increasing Vitamin D and Calcium intake. In addition, the health plan care coordinators have received training regarding the other aspects of falls prevention and steps they can take to keep Minnesotans right side up.

Next steps for the Initiative include outreach and education to health care and social service professionals, identification and support of local falls prevention coalitions and implementation of Matter of Balance and CDSMP in communities throughout Minnesota.

Key partners involved in this effort include a variety of organizations including MN Area Agencies on Aging, public health, senior volunteer programs, Volunteers of America, American Physical Therapy Association-MN Chapter, MN Occupational Therapy Association, MN Health and Housing Alliance, MN Council of Health Plans, each of the health plans serving older adults in MN, MN Senior Health Care Options (MSHO), Stratis Health (MN's QIO), MN Safety Council, Mayo Clinic, University of Minnesota.

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