



Elderly Falls Prevention Legislation and Statutes

For Immediate Release

Each year in the United States, one in three adults over 65 years of age falls. Long-term physical injuries, such as hip fractures and traumatic brain injuries, are merely the tip of the iceberg in terms of consequences and costs (bookmark to cost data below) of older adult falls.

About 20 percent of older adult falls cause serious injuries that can limit mobility, diminish quality of life, and increase the risk of premature death.

- Between 2000 and 2010, fall death rates rose 63 percent for men and 83 percent for women.
- Falls cause over 95 percent of hip fractures.
- One in five people who sustain a hip fracture die within a year following their injury.
- Annually, falls among older adults are responsible for over 20,000 deaths, 2.3 million emergency department visits, and more than \$30 billion in direct medical costs.

The State Role

Falls are not an inevitable part of aging and are largely preventable. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has developed a fall prevention tool kit for health care providers called STEADI (Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths and Injuries) to help them reduce falls by implementing the American Geriatrics Society's clinical guideline for fall prevention.

Some strategies to reduce falls include:

- Providing incentives to primary care providers to integrate falls risk assessment and fall prevention activities into their practice.
- Supporting continuing medical education courses that teach health care providers how to assess and reduce the risk of falls through treatment and/or referral to evidence-based fall prevention programs.

For more information about proven programs to reduce older adult falls, or additional examples of state policy action to address older adult falls please contact info-health@ncsl.org.

Reference:

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/health/elderly-falls-prevention-legislation-and-statutes.aspx>

