Did you know... every year in the United States more than 1/3 of adults age 65+ have a fall, with approximately 1/3 of fallers sustaining an injury? Research indicates that people who fall are 2-3 times more likely to fall again, and each fall increases the likelihood of more serious injury or death.

New Jersey Falls Facts

- In 2013, falls were the leading cause of death from unintentional injury in NJ among those 60 and older. Fall-related deaths were more than twice the amount of those resulting from a motor vehicle accident.
- Every 9 minutes in NJ an older adult 60+ is seen in the emergency room for a fall (2013).
- In NJ, 77% of falls admitted as inpatients were 60 or older (2013).
- The average cost for an inpatient hospitalization to treat an older adult for a non-fatal fall in NJ hospitals was $74,556 in 2013.
- The total cost of all hospital treated falls for older adults 60+ in NJ was $1,715,733,716 in 2013.

Falls Deaths are Only the Tip of the Iceberg

The population aged 60 years and over represented 20.1% of the New Jersey population in the year 2013. It is expected to grow to be 25.7% of the population by 2030. As the population ages, the impact and cost of fall-related deaths and injuries will increase dramatically.
New Jersey 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. New Jersey is taking action to prevent falls through the following initiatives:

- The New Jersey Fall Prevention Workgroup was formed in early 2009 to develop and implement a community-based, fall prevention campaign geared to older adults. The impetus for the workgroup came from the New Jersey Interagency Council on Osteoporosis (ICO), which identified community-based fall prevention as a goal in its strategic plan.

- The goals and objectives of the New Jersey Fall Prevention Workgroup are:
  - Develop a tool kit for fall prevention awareness week for the 21 local Area Agencies on Aging and other community based-organizations; a comprehensive fall prevention campaign includes the effects of medication on fall risk, poor vision as a fall risk, the importance of exercise in fall prevention and home safety educational materials.
  - Review, evaluate and distribute falls data to local stakeholders.
  - Foster a statewide fall prevention awareness effort, including several local events.
  - Develop and/or gather brochures/educational materials for prevention programs.
  - Develop and disseminate a community-based fall prevention health education session as part of an ongoing statewide health promotion initiative.
  - Build capacity for the “A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls” program and the Otago Exercise Program

- New Jersey offers model physical activities programs, including Project Healthy Bones, A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls, the Otago Exercise Program and Move Today.

- To highlight fall hazards and increase awareness about how to prevent and reduce falls, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie proclaimed the third week of Fall (September 21-27, 2015) as “Falls Prevention Awareness Week.”

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Sources:
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CDC WISQARS 2013 Fatal Unintentional Injuries
US Census 2010 population figures
New Jersey Leadership
Making a Difference to Address Fall Prevention

Developed by the National Council on Aging The National Council on Aging is a nonprofit service and advocacy organization with headquarters in Washington, DC. The NCOA is a national voice for older Americans – especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged – and the community organizations that serve them. For more information, please visit www.ncoa.org