

Facts About Falls

Falls are costly – both in dollars and in the loss of well-being for older people. Research has shown that even if a fall does not cause any injuries, it can cause a fear of falling or loss of confidence. This fear leads many older people to limit their activities. It may result in reduced mobility and loss of physical conditioning, further increasing the risk of falling. Here are some alarming statistics about falls:



Falls: A State and National Crisis

- Nationally, falls were the leading cause of non-fatal injuries for those 65 and older causing in 2014:
 - 800,000 hospitalizations
 - 2.8 million emergency department (ED) visits (CDC)
- Wisconsin has the highest rate of fall-related deaths in the U.S. — more than twice the national rate. (CDC)

Falls are costly

- In 2015, the Medicare costs for non-fatal falls were over \$31 billion (CDC)
- In Wisconsin, at least \$771 million in hospital charges were attributable to falls in 2015; 70% of these costs were paid by the Medicare & Medicaid programs. (Wisconsin DHS)
- Average fall-related costs increased 55% statewide for ED visits from 2010 to 2014 in Wisconsin. (Wisconsin DHS, WISH data)

Falls can lead to serious injuries, institutionalization, and death

- Nationally, there are 2.8 million ED visits annually for fall injuries (CDC)
- Each year in the U.S., at least 300,000 older people are hospitalized for hip fractures. More than 95% of hip fractures are caused by falling. (CDC)
- In Wisconsin, 40% of individuals entering nursing homes had a fall in the previous 30 days. (Wisconsin DHS)

Falls are preventable

- 1 million falls could be prevented with 5,000 providers using effective screening and treatment over a five-year period. (CDC)
- Evidence-based self-management programs such as Stepping On, Otago, and Ta'i Chi are proven to prevent or reduce falls; Stepping On falls prevention program reduces fall risk by 31%. (Journal of Safety Research, 2/2015)