

ISDH Long Term Care  
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## Falls Prevention Awareness Day

### INDIANA TO "STAND TOGETHER" TO REDUCE FALLS ON FALLS PREVENTION AWARENESS DAY

INDIANAPOLIS-Indiana joins 45 other states and the Falls Free<sup>®</sup> Coalition in declaring a statewide Falls Prevention Awareness Day on the first day of fall, Sept. 22, 2012. This year's theme, *Standing Together to Prevent Falls*, aims to unite professionals, the elderly, caregivers and family members to play a part in raising awareness and preventing falls in the older adult population.

"In 2009, elderly adults in Indiana suffered 7,952 falls that resulted in hospitalizations and there were 288 fatalities due to falls," said Art Logsdon, Director, Division of Trauma and Injury Prevention at the Indiana State Department of Health. "We need to stand together as a community and raise awareness of preventive measures that can keep seniors safe in Indiana."

Every 15 seconds, an elderly adult is seen in an Emergency Department for a fall-related injury. Falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries for those aged 65 and over. As one ages, the chances of falling and of being seriously injured in a fall increases.

Five easy things you can do to prevent falls are:

- Increase your physical activity. Exercises like walking or swimming at least 15 minutes a day can help build muscle strength and improve balance, which can prevent falls. Exercise programs that increase strength and improve balance also help.
- See your eye doctor once every year. Age-related eye diseases, such as cataracts, macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy, can increase the risk of falling. Early detection is critical to minimizing the effects of these conditions.
- Review your medications. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about the medicines you are taking and whether they may cause drowsiness or dizziness.
- Remove environmental hazards. Search your home for anything that could cause falls, including poor lighting, loose rugs, slippery floors and unsteady furniture. Remove or modify these hazards.
- Think, plan and slow down. Many falls are caused by hurrying. Slow down and think through the task you are performing.

Thirty percent of adults age 65 and older who live in the community fall each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). That number increases to 50 percent for older adults

who live in residential care facilities or nursing homes.

At senior centers and other community-based organizations across the United States, programs like *A Matter of Balance* and *Stepping On*, help older adults gain the strength, improved balance and confidence to help them live healthier lives and preserve their independence.

Indiana is part of the Falls Free© Coalition, which includes more than 40 states and 70 national organizations, professional associations and federal agencies across the country dedicated to reducing fall-related injuries and deaths among older adults.

For more information on injury prevention, visit the Indiana State Department of Health's website at [www.StateHealth.in.gov](http://www.StateHealth.in.gov).

## Falls Prevention Resource Center

Last week the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) presented its 12th Healthcare Quality Leadership Conference. The first Leadership Conference was in June 2007 on the topic of falls. Following the conference, the ISDH created a Falls Prevention Resource Center to provide some of the resources from that conference. The Falls Prevention Resource Center is directed towards the issues of preventing falls in health care facilities providing care for patients and residents. The Center provides information, tools, and resources for assessing risks and improving the environment for patients and residents. The ISDH Falls Prevention Resource Center is located at <http://www.in.gov/isdh/25376.htm>.