

Falls Prevention Awareness Week

2021 Impact Report



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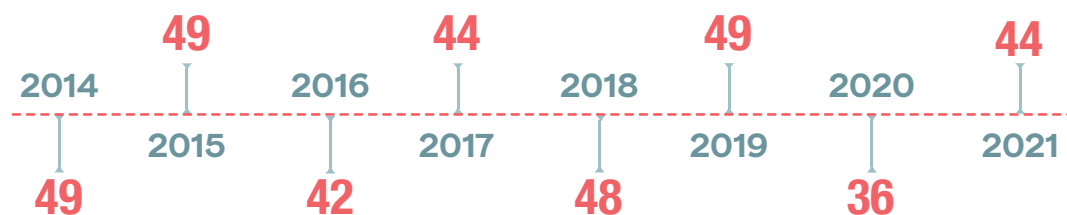
The Importance of Falls Prevention

Falls have been the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries among older adults, leading to serious injuries and increased risk of additional falls. For years, the National Council on Aging (NCOA) has been committed to changing the trajectory of falls-related injuries by helping older adults gain the confidence and skills needed to prevent a fall. We run the National Falls Prevention Resource Center, lead a nationwide falls prevention coalition, and help motivate thousands of older adults to do a falls prevention screening and enroll in workshops. In addition, every year we spearhead Falls Prevention Awareness Week, an awareness and activation campaign that reaches millions of people.

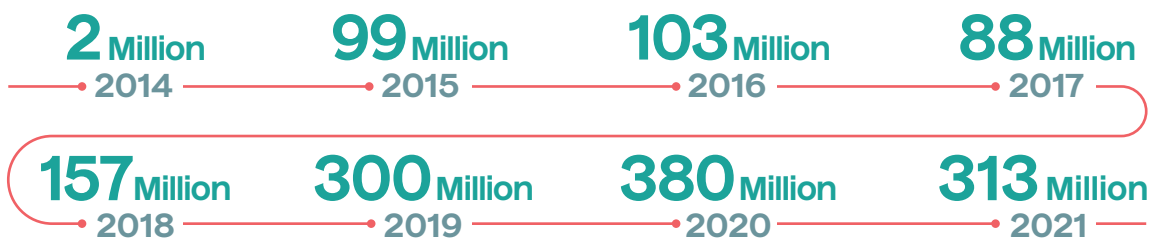
For this year's Falls Prevention Awareness Week, NCOA encouraged state falls prevention coalitions and community organizations to pursue partnerships with local fire departments and emergency medical services (EMS). Fire and EMS responders are first to arrive at the home when responding to a lift assist call, and often get called back for recurring lift assists. As a result, there is an opportunity for community organizations serving older adults to partner with fire/EMS agencies, who can provide insights into what is taking place inside the home and additional information on what patterns they see when responding to a lift assist. Additionally, fire/EMS responders are viewed as trusted individuals and can be a source of referral for connecting older adults to community programs and services. Together, community organizations and fire/EMS agencies can help older adults stay independent in their home and stay falls free.

Falls Prevention Awareness Week by the Numbers

Number of States Participating



Number of Individuals Reached



National Outreach

NCOA utilized traditional and digital media to reach older adults, caregivers, and professionals to raise awareness around falls prevention. Traditional media included press and matte releases; digital media included emails, paid, and organic custom posts on major social media platforms. Our local partners and Falls Free Initiative members promoted falls prevention education by utilizing social media platforms to conduct public awareness, provided educational presentations, and assessed older adults for their falls risk using NCOA's Falls Free CheckUp.



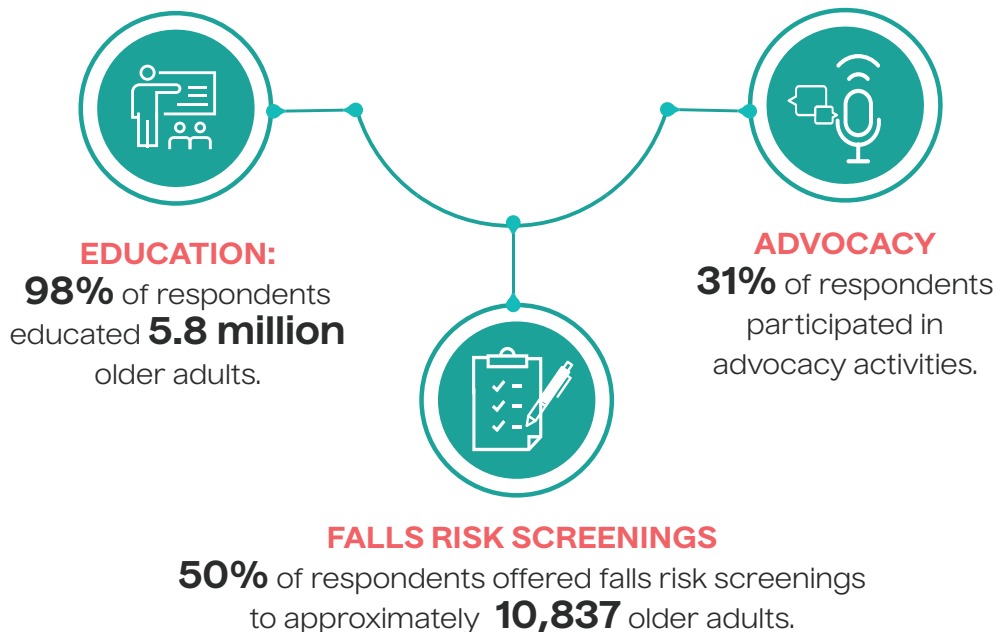
Grassroots Efforts

An important factor to prevent falls is bringing awareness around this topic. NCOA's goal for Falls Prevention Awareness Week is to encourage aging adults to learn about their risk of fall injuries and take action to reduce the risk. In addition to the Falls Free CheckUp screening tool, we translated consumer materials into Spanish to ensure our efforts are reaching Spanish-speaking older adults as well. This year state and local partners worked diligently to continue bringing awareness on falls prevention despite the inability to gather in person. Our state and local partners were able to accomplish this effort through virtual educational presentations to older adults, caregivers, and professionals, and engagement on social media platforms by conducting public awareness on falls risk reduction. Additionally, local partners advocated with lawmakers in their state.

2021 Grassroots Reach Total

294 respondents from **44** states participated in the survey.

Reached **5.9** million older adults throughout the nation.



Engagement of Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services in Falls Prevention

Falls prevention is a team effort, and fire departments and EMS have an integral role in ensuring the safety of the older adults by connecting them to falls prevention resources in their community. Local organizations who have engaged fire departments in community falls prevention activities have demonstrated the value of community partnerships and how both entities work together to reduce the number of falls and lift assist calls in their area.

To support this effort, NCOA developed resources and hosted an educational webinar series: **Fire and Falls Webinar Series: Engaging Firefighters and EMS for Falls Prevention**. Four events were offered throughout September with information on the importance of starting conversations with fire departments, using local data to support falls prevention activities, and firsthand examples of how these community partnerships flourished to assist older adults.

632 registered for webinar series

Best Practices for Developing Fire/EMS Partnerships

Speakers: Sato Ashida, PhD & Carri Casteel, PhD

Partnerships in Action: The CARES Paramedicine Program in Ohio

Speakers: Carmen Quatman, MD, PhD & Catherine Quatman-Yates, DPT, PhD

National Fire Protection Association & Remembering When Program

Speaker: Andrea Vastis, MPH, CHES

Using 911 Data to Identify Fall Patterns and Predictors in Florida

Speakers: Lori Collins & Jillian Rose

Falls Free CheckUp

NCOA's Falls Free CheckUp is a digital screening tool, modeled after the 12-question screener included in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths and Injuries (STEADI) Stay Independent brochure. Partners direct older adults to use this resource to better understand their risk of falling and learn steps to reduce the likelihood of a fall.



**From August 2021 through
November 2021**



Total
Falls Free CheckUp
Users
7,297

Examples of Falls Prevention Awareness Week Activities

Thank you to all state coalitions and local partners for their efforts to make the 2021 Falls Prevention Awareness Week a success. See below for examples of activities that can be replicated in your community for the next observance.

Leveraging Partnerships with Fire Departments and EMS Services

“[Our] partnership with fire departments and EMS included in-home evaluations, installation of grab bars, review of medications, information of falls prevention.”

- Kay Kuwamura, Master Trainer for EnhanceFitness
Kauai, Hawaii

“Members of the Illinois Fall Prevention Coalition sent local fire departments information on NCOA's Fire & Falls webinar services, and then provided fire departments with related printed materials/articles.”

-Elizabeth Peterson, Illinois Falls Prevention Coalition,
Illinois

“[We] worked with local EMS agencies when they are called for a lift assist. The EMS notifies us when a fall occurs in either county and we then call the client to inform them of our services for older adults.”

-Debra Gwin, Platte County Senior Fund, Missouri

Engaging with Tribal Communities

“Pueblo and Tribal Communities were engaged to provide outreach to their elders; Zia Pueblo distributed falls prevention education resources to households with a person 60+; Mescalero Apache hosted an event for elders with a theme, “Stand Tall, Don't Fall” with drive through education including fall risk and home safety assessment. Gift bags with a night light and non-slip socks were distributed.”

- Janet Popp, PT, MS, New Mexico Adult Falls Prevention Coalition, New Mexico

Introducing Falls Prevention Programs

“Demonstrating Bingocize® at low-income older adults apartment communities that had not yet currently agreed to host a Bingocize® multi-series course allowed us to show residents that falls prevention activities and physical activity movement designed for increasing independent living and reducing falls can be fun, engaging and innovative.”

- Natalie Mazzullo, University of Nevada,
Reno, Nevada

“A Matter of Balance Class at a Senior Center and Walk With Ease at another senior center introduced the topic of Falls Prevention and fear of falling to several new participants. By using an evidence based program, participants could trust and guarantee that information shared was accurate and up to date. Several participants commented that they have learned more in the classes than any article they have read. Also, several said they learned new ways to look at falls and falls prevention--in a way that made sense to them and that they could act upon.”

- Dawn Batman, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania



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Enlisting Support of Local Partners

“What I love about this month is how it activates and brings together our 15+ organizations on the island who are part of our Falls Prevention Coalition. Our focus was on 1) Raising awareness on fall risk as you age 2) Education/Resources on reducing falls 3) Empowering Older Adults to take action. We put together assets for everyone to use (not just in Falls Prevention month but the whole year), and a calendar of events for the month. I think it was the combination of assets and the way they were rolled out that optimized effectiveness. From demonstrations at Council on Aging to a full page article in our local paper, everyone got on the bandwagon.”

- Cindy Trish, Healthy Aging
Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

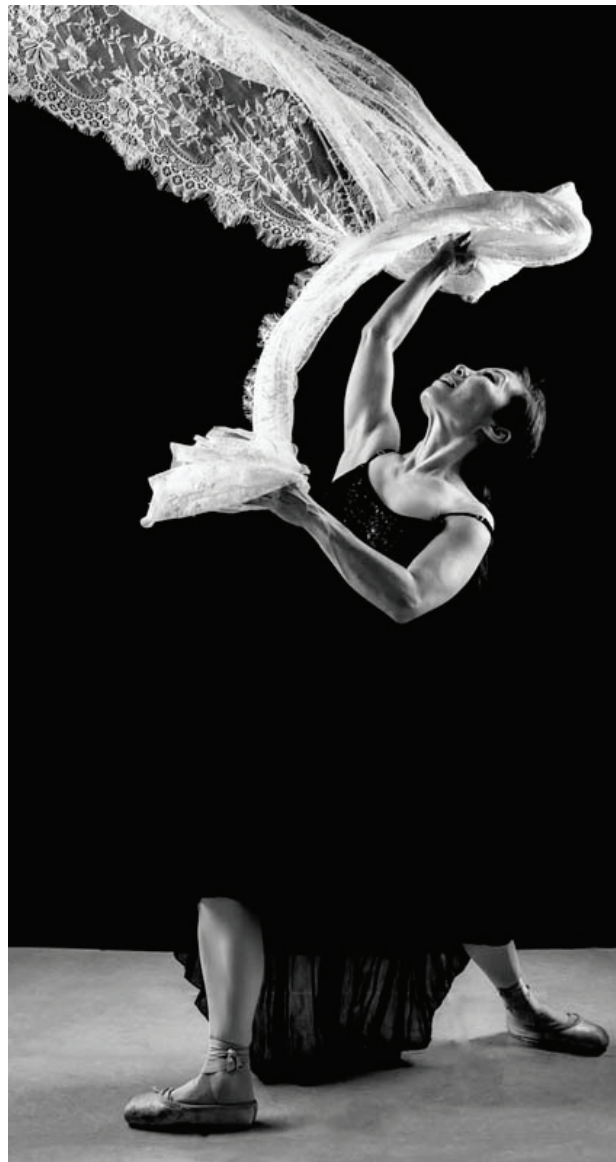
“Local partnerships seemed to contribute most to the success across the state, both in urban and rural areas. Here are examples as reported by statewide partners: Piedmont Area FPC partnered with AARP and a university to offer a range of programs in-person and virtually; High Country FPC partnered with senior centers, libraries, health care facilities, community health workers, and Appalachian State University, and all partners were excited and enthusiastic to raise awareness; In a rural county (Halifax), Senior Games and a clinic helped to raise awareness among the Mayor and Town Commissioners and had a huge impact of evidence-based fall prevention programs, An AAA partnered with senior centers to offer tai chi in three counties; A balance screening partnership between King Senior Center and the therapy department of a local hospital helped to raise awareness among the general public to help assess their own fall risk; Walnut Cove Senior Center's partnership with a local cooperative extension office helped to raise awareness for Falls Prevention Awareness Week.”

- Ellen Bailey, North Carolina Falls Prevention Coalition, North Carolina

“The daily safety briefing information was highly informative for staff in the hospital and the ambulatory clinic. It created more staff buy-in for community programming and referrals. We received many comments that these health care professionals did not know the stats of older adult falls. The article in the e-newsletter to Faith

Community Nurses and community agencies caused other agencies to highlight falls prevention in their own newsletters, and put up bulletin boards, hold falls screenings and promote the A Matter of Balance and SAIL classes coming up in the area. Receiving phone calls following to sign up for EB classes following the radio and news spots. Six Falls Prevention classes filled for late Sept/October following Falls Prev. activities and screenings. New apt. buildings calling for staff to come do education in their location.”

- Karla Cazer, Sanford Health, South Dakota



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Utilizing Social Media

“The redesigned graphics [from NCOA] contributed to our social media campaign which was our most shared series of posts to date.”

- Jen Paquet, Healthy Living for Maine, Maine

Coordinating Health Events Focused on Falls Prevention

“A health fair event focused on fall prevention that was held at our agency’s annual 5K run/walk, it was our first in-person event since we re-opened. We distributed fall prevention information, conducted fall risk screenings held a demonstration of Tai Chi Quan: Moving for Better Balance. It helped to raise awareness in the and highlighted our fall prevention programs/services. Students from multiple disciplines (OT, OTA, PT, nursing and pharmacy) were involved in providing the fall risk screenings and development of informational materials. During that week, students also provided a number of online educational presentations such as: Home Environmental modifications to Reduce Falls, Proper Nutrition Management to Reduce Hypertension and Risk of Falls, The Importance of Exercise to Prevent Falls and Best Practices of Fall Prevention. Our senior centers worked with their community partners to provide balance screenings, demonstrations on balance/strength exercises, [blood pressure] screenings and educational presentations Safety in the Home - Fall Prevention.”

- Donna Bilz, Baltimore County Department of Aging, Maryland

“We provided an all-in-one event where participants heard from two keynote speakers, Dr. Warren Dorlac, Trauma Medical Director of UCHHealth Medical Center of the Rockies and Amy Dodd, UCHHealth Physical Therapist. Afterwards they were able to choose from a variety of educational opportunities including visit resource booths where they received information from many different organizations, had a bone density screen, balance screen and/or BP check. We also had UCHHealth pharmacists and their student interns to provide medication reviews plus Tai Chi and Yoga instructors to offer 15-minute exercise previews. We received so much positive feedback from our participants and vendors stating how well organized it was and how much information they were able to walk away with. Our PT who provided the balance screenings said it was the most moderate and high-risk screenings she had ever done at a health fair event which I believe shows how much fall prevention education and resources are needed right now after a year and a half of less activity. It also created an opportunity for the participants to socialize and see that the senior center was a safe place to be.”

- Alison Weston, UCHHealth, Colorado

“Partnering with the Oklahoma State Fair allowed our coalition to reach older adults from across the state. Many older adults who live in more rural areas come up to the city for the state fair. We were able to provide education on fall prevention, including a Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance demonstrations, for over 300 people.”

- Madelyn Maxwell, Oklahoma Falls Prevention Coalition, Oklahoma

“The Falls Free Coalition hosted its inaugural falls prevention event at the indoor gym complex at a university campus. The event, which coincided with National Falls Prevention Awareness Week, provided individuals who are 55 and older with resources and information about how they can prevent falls and trips and improve their balance and strength. The event began with opening remarks from lawmakers and public officials and was followed by a panel discussion that included P.T./O.T., Trauma Practitioner, Pharmacist, Dietician, Gerontologist, and PA Dept of Aging to discuss aspects of factors contributing to falls and fall prevention from these practitioners. Several local agencies set up stations around the room to provide attendees with blood pressure, balance, strength, hearing, and vision screenings. The event concluded with breakout sessions with demonstrations of Walk with Ease, A Matter of Balance, Yoga/TaiChi, strength training, Healthy Steps in Motion, Healthy Steps for Older Adults, and Rise and Shine to the event attendees to highlight the ease and importance of incorporating exercise into their lives to prevent falls and maintain health.”

- Susan Neff, Pennsylvania State Falls Prevention Coalition, Pennsylvania

Partnering with Faith-Based Organizations

“A fall prevention lecture followed by free fall risk assessments and a balance training course for local churches was my best reach. There were several individuals who were at high risk and came to the realization after my presentation. They were advised to ask their doctor for PT to help with balance training. As an OT, I reviewed all the home safety checklist and they LOVED it!!!! It opened discussion of safety in the home.”

- Dina Kartsonas, Fyzical Therapy & Balance Centers, Illinois



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Spreading the Word Through Traditional Media

“News about and a brief demonstration on morning News program of our Tai Chi Instructor workshop was well received, yet the most successful response was to our 30 second PSA (locally produced and created). It was shown on Three Networks for a period of 6 weeks with a total exposure of 730 times being broadcast. It produced an amazing 96 phone calls from interested seniors and/or family members asking for additional information, access to home safety equipment, and a copy of our brochure “Check for Safety”. [Ninety-six] is an astounding number of phone calls from a PSA where the phone number is the last thing displayed and only for a couple of seconds. We are thrilled with this response. It means a lot more than 96 got the message. Plus the demographics and watch success lists from the stations give us our reason for selecting which shows to pair with.”

- Stanley Michaels, Hawaii State Fall Prevention Consortium, Hawaii

“Two occupational therapists went on a local show called Across the Fence to talk about fall prevention. They talked about the risk factors for falls and what older adults could do to make their home environments safer to prevent falls”

- Ela Dupont, OTR/L, Franklin County Home Healthy Agency, Vermont

Promoting Falls Prevention Awareness with Lawmakers

“Securing our gubernatorial proclamation allowed us to tie the press release to the observed week and raise the stature of the information. We displayed the Proclamation at the Resource Fair and a regional newspaper in our state displayed the proclamation on its website with the press release.”

- Diana Curtis & Kate Angermeier, Delaware Injury Prevention Coalition, Delaware

Encouraging Annual Traditions

“Ohio’s annual campaign, 10 Million Steps, has been conducted for long enough that partners anticipate it being announced each year. It also offers a very easy way for any organization or individual to participate and feel part of the National Falls Prevention Awareness Week efforts.”

- Elizabeth Fries, Ohio Older Adults Fall Prevention Coalition, Ohio

Coordinating Falls Prevention Webinars and Presentations

“The Farewell to Falls program of Stanford Health Care held a webinar entitled Aging in Place Safely was offered by the occupational therapists, who walked through a home and showed fall hazards and modifications. Home safety company walked through their showroom and pointed out commonly used home safety equipment. Fire department shared what to do in case of fall when need assistance, as well as info on our Life File and other handy resources.”

- Ellen Corman, StopFalls Network California, California

“We conducted our Annual Falls Prevention Symposium as a weeklong, virtual symposium during the week of Sept. 20-24th. We had 3 days of content specific for professionals and 2 days of content focused on the caregiver/public.”

- Trina Radske-Suchan, Iowa Falls Prevention Coalition, Iowa

“We offered our first falls prevention seminars in 2020, with 2 sessions of a single consumer seminar. In 2021, we expanded our unique virtual seminars to include healthcare students and current healthcare professionals to make them aware of the need to do falls assessment as a matter of practice. For consumers, we added Identifying and Preventing Trip Hazards at Home, and a Simple Steps seminar that discussed why physical activity was an important part of preventing falls and featured a 20-minute follow-along demonstration of simple at-home exercises. They were demonstrated using both standing and seated positions.”

- Erin Olsen, Idaho Commission on Aging, Idaho

“The presentation given by the OT students from SUNY Orange, on how to prevent falls at home and a demonstration of various items that are available that can help individuals remain independent at home, was well received by the older adults who attended the Falls Prevention Day Event.”

- Melanie Tanner, Orange County Office for the Aging, New York

“I created a handout and demonstrated falls prevention exercises that could be safely done at home to 50 older adults at a senior center. I gave a talk about Falls Prevention and promoted evidence-based programming to the same group. We also discussed about home safety and the importance of speaking with their doctor if they notice a decline in balance.”

- Mary Noonan, Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia, Virginia

“Aging and Disability Services collaborated with King County Department of Community and Human Services and a community-based agency, Sound Generations to host a virtual presentation of evidence-based Enhance Fitness classes offered in King County and a medication and fall risk panel discussion.”

- Mary Pat O’Leary, Aging and Disability Services, Area Agency on Aging for Seattle/King County, Washington

Acknowledgements

Falls Prevention Awareness Week 2021 was made possible in part by the U.S. Administration for Community Living through funding of NCOA's National Falls Prevention Resource Center. NCOA gratefully acknowledges our federal and national stakeholders, as well as state and local Falls Prevention Coalitions for participating in Falls Prevention Awareness Week. We appreciate the year-round efforts to prevent falls and falls-related injuries among older adults.

FUNDER

- Administration for Community Living

NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

- AARP
- Administration for Community Living
- Advancing States
- American Association on Health and Disability
- American Occupational Therapy Association
- American Physical Therapy Association
- American Podiatric Medical Association
- American Society of Consultant Pharmacists
- Bone Health & Osteoporosis Foundation
- Brain Injury Association of America
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
- Diverse Elders Coalition
- Evidence-Based Leadership Collaborative
- Genesis Rehab Services
- Grantmakers in Aging
- Hartford Center for Mature Market Excellence
- Home Modification Occupational Therapy Alliance
- Homes Renewed
- IDEA Center, State University of New York at Buffalo
- Johns Hopkins School of Nursing
- LeadingAge
- Meals on Wheels America
- National Alliance for Caregiving
- National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Program
- National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
- National Center for Healthy Housing
- National Fire Protection Association
- National Indian Council on Aging
- National Senior Games Association
- Prevent Blindness
- Rebuilding Together
- Safe States Alliance
- University of Southern California Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, Fall Prevention Center of Excellence
- USAging
- YMCA of the USA



Learn more at www.ncoa.org/FallsWeek

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