

# Falls Prevention: Leading the Way

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# Falls

- 35% of people 65+ fall **each** year<sup>1</sup>
- Those who fall are 2-3 times more likely to fall again<sup>2</sup>
- 10%-20% of falls cause serious injuries<sup>3</sup>

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1. Hornbrook, *Gerontologist*, 1994; Hausdorff, *Arch Phys Med & Rehab*, 2001

2. Tinetti, *New Eng J Med*, 1988; Teno, *JAGS*, 1990

3. Sterling, *J Trauma-Inj Infection & Critical Care*, 2001

# 2004 Washington State Hospitalizations

## A Comparison: Falls Among Older Adults & Motor Vehicle Crashes (All Ages)

#	Cause	Population
11,615	Falls	Adults Age 65+
2,422	Motor Vehicle Crashes	All Ages

# Falls Among Older Adults (Age 65+) Washington State 2004 & 2005

Year	Hospitalizations (non-fatal)	Deaths
2004	11,615	456
2005	12,214	491
Difference 2004 - 2005	+600	+35

# Quality of Life Impact



- 20% - 30% fear falling<sup>1</sup>
- 20% die within a year after hip fracture<sup>2</sup>
- 25% in a nursing home one year later<sup>3</sup>

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1. Vellas BJ, *Age & Aging*, 1997; Friedman SM, *JAGS*, 2002
  2. Lu-Yao GL, *AJPH*, 1994
  3. Magaziner J, *J Gerontology: Medical Sciences*, 2000

# Economic Impact

In 2000, total cost of fatal fall injuries among people 65+:



Total: ~ **\$19 billion**

- Fatal falls: **\$0.2 billion**
- Nonfatal injuries: **\$19 billion**

# Identify Risk Factors



Personal (Intrinsic)  
Environmental (Extrinsic)

# Personal Risk Factors – Not Modifiable



Photo: Health Canada/Santé Canada

- Older age
- Female
- White
- Chronic diseases
- Mentally impaired

# Personal Risk Factors- Modifiable

	<u>Relative Risk</u>
■ Muscle weakness x	4.4
■ Gait & balance problems	2.9 x
■ Vision problems	2.5 x
■ Psychoactive medications	1.7

X  
American Geriatrics Society, JAGS, 2001

# Environmental Factors – Modifiable

- Clutter in walkways
- No stair railings or grab bars
- Loose rugs
- Dim lighting



# Interventions – What Works?



- Comprehensive clinical assessment<sup>1</sup>
- Exercise for balance & strength<sup>2</sup>
- Medication management<sup>3</sup>
- Vision correction<sup>4</sup>
- Reducing home hazards<sup>5</sup>

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1. American Geriatrics Society, *JAGS*, 2001

2. Lord SR, *JAGS*, 2001

3. Cumming RG, *Drugs & Aging*, 1998

4. Ray W, *Topics in Geriatric R Rehab*, 1990

5. Day L, *BMJ* 2002; Gill TM, *JAGS*, 1999

# Coalitions & Partnerships

- Coalitions & partnerships bring diverse resources to older adult falls
- Together, state & local organizations can create new, innovative strategies

# Goal

To reduce death & disability caused  
by falls and improve the quality of life  
for seniors in our communities

# WA State Fall Prevention Initiative Strategies

- Have evaluated senior exercise & fall risk factor reduction programs available statewide
- Promote fall risk assessment, intervention & referral of seniors at high risk for falls
- Promote collaboration & collective action of community agencies serving older adults

# Thank you

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# *It Takes a Village to Prevent Senior Falls*

# WA DOH Senior Fall Prevention Study

## Translational Research

Intervention	Research Study: Randomized Controlled Trial (453 seniors)	SAIL Exercise, Education & Risk Reduction Classes: <i>a public health targeted fall prevention intervention</i>
Exercise	EnhanceFitness® Program (EFP)	SAIL: new instructor training, name, messages, format, components, education & evaluation
Education	RN-delivered group education (6 hours)	SAIL Guide & in-class “health tips”
Multifactorial Risk Assessment	Individual risk assessment by RN w/results & info mailed to MD	My Falls Free Plan: 1 page self-assessment & action plan

# Lessons Learned About Older Adults & Falls ....

- Many older adults perceive “falls prevention” as a negative message
- Older adults have barriers accessing falls prevention information and resources
- Older adults are often unaware of their health & medication falls risk factors, and overall risk for falls
- It takes a fall for older adults to be concerned about falls
- Health care providers “don’t ask” & older adults “don’t tell” about falls
- Older adults will reduce modifiable risk factors with info from health care professionals and access to falls prevention information and resources
- Community systems and organizations want to increase older adult services and programs

# Community-based Tools

- CDC Brochures: What You Can Do To Prevent Falls & Home Safety Checklist
- Stay Active & Independent for Life (SAIL): An Information Guide for Adults 65+
  - “Are You Ready to Exercise?”: health self-assessment tool
  - “My Falls Free Plan”: falls risk self-assessment & action plan
- Local Physical Activity Resource Guides [www.activeoptions.org](http://www.activeoptions.org)
- Stay Active & Independent for Life (SAIL)—a strength & balance fitness class for adults 65+: WA DOH public domain exercise program (in development)
- Geographic Information Systems: identify senior census densities for program placement (health depts., city/county land planning offices)
- Governor’s Proclamation: WA State Fall Prevention Awareness Day on September 21, 2006: public events in 14 communities in WA state

# Professional & Public Education

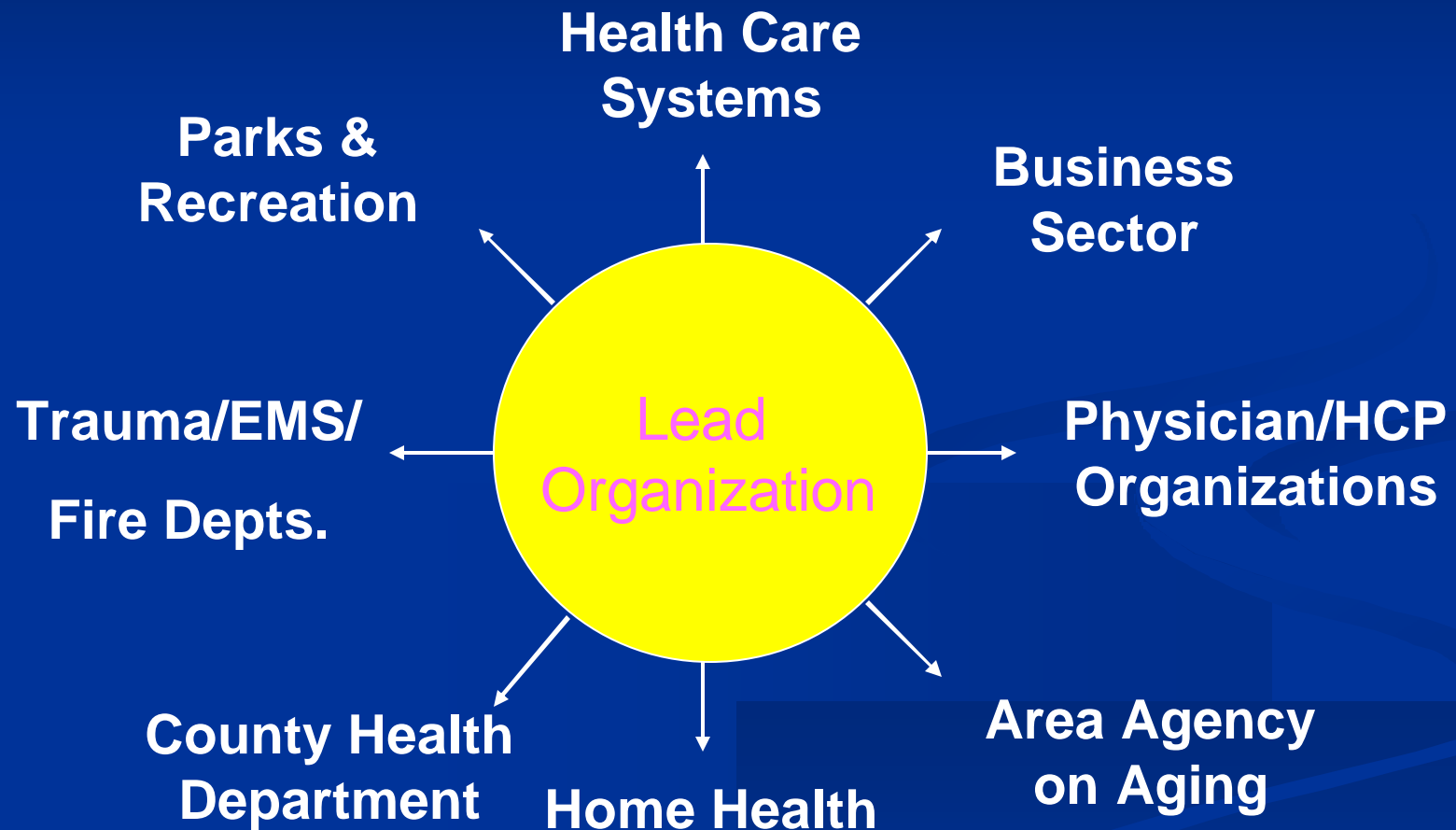
Health Care Providers, Allied Health & Community Service Professionals:

- Seminars
- Presentations
- In-Service Training
- Consultation
- Technical assistance

Older adults & families:

- Community Events
- Presentations
- Falls Prevention Awareness Day
- Disseminate information (brochures, guides, fliers)
- Health fairs

# Community Fall Prevention Strategy: Fall Prevention Coalitions & Partnerships



# Pierce County Falls Prevention Coalition

- Formed in July 2005:
  - Creating needed linkages & partnerships and infrastructure, & action plan at county level
  - Increasing community awareness
  - Providing public and professional education
  - Advocacy for policy/system changes
  - Facilitating community-level funding

# 2007 Falls Prevention Community Activities

[www.fallsfreewashington.org](http://www.fallsfreewashington.org)

- Thurston County: Providence St. Peter's Hospital
  - Pierce County: NWOI
  - King County: Healthy Aging Partnership
  - Wenatchee: North Central EMS
  - Walla Walla: Walla Walla Fire Dept.
  - Snoqualmie Valley: Snoqualmie Valley Hospital
  - Lewis County: Centralia Lewis 12 Fire Dept.
  - Kitsap County: Kitsap County Health Dept.
  - Okanogan County: Okanogan Health Dept.
  - Spokane County: Spokane Reg. Health District & EMS
  - *Snohomish County: North Region EMS*
  - *Whidbey Island: Whidbey General Hospital EMS*
- ...and more...

# Inventory Your Community: Use the Matrix Approach

## Community-based Organizations:

- AAA
- Emergency medical services/trauma network
- Hospitals
- Home health agencies
- Parks & recreation
- Fitness/gym facilities
- Public health dept.
- Physical/occupational therapy providers
- Senior residential facilities
- Universities/colleges
- Library systems

## Prevention Strategies Offered:

- Individual risk assessment
- Regular strength & balance exercise
- Gait & assistive device training
- Medication review & management
- Management of chronic conditions
- Vision correction
- Public & professional education/information
- Home safety improvements

# Starting a community senior falls prevention initiative or coalition

- Know the issue - globally & locally
- Consult the literature on best practices
- Identify your goals
- Get organizational buy-in
- Identify & engage your partners
- Start with 'who you know'
- Assess your resources & needs
- Create a plan & infrastructure
- Consult with others who are doing this
- Implement & evaluate

# Resource Opportunities

- Utilize EMS resources - state & local
- Local & state philanthropic foundations
- Leverage your partners' financial & in-kind resources (staff, printing, event sponsors, etc)
- Be creative: local businesses, hospitals, home health services, public health
- State the case for grantfunders

# 2007 WA State DOH & ADOSA-funded Resources

## WA State Dept Of Health:

- Educational materials:
  - SAIL Guides
  - CDC Fall Prevention & Home Safety brochures
  - Strategies for Prevention
- Injury data
- Technical assistance
- Create state-level linkages & partnerships
- Facilitate local linkages

## NorthWest Orthopaedic Institute:

- Training:
  - strength & balance exercise & education program
  - risk assessment & intervention
- Professional education:
  - health care
  - public health
  - aging service providers
- Technical assistance
- Coalition development & community mobilization

# Ongoing WA State Action to Promote Falls Prevention

- WA State Injury Prevention Plan Implementation
- Inform & educate about best practices
- Support legislation and funding opportunities
- Continue to develop local and state falls prevention infrastructures, coalitions & partnerships
- Continue tool and program development to meet community needs

# AAA Opportunities

- Increase number & diversity of linkages & partnerships
- Leadership roles for coalition development
- Promote EMS/trauma & health care referrals to aging services
- Promote evidence-based fall prevention strategies for community-based organizations
- Increase seniors' access to fall prevention intervention information & resources
- Provide public & professional education & consultation

## *In Summary.....*

Fall prevention is an integral  
part of the  
framework for promoting  
independence &  
aging in place

# Together We Can Make A Difference!



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***Thank You***