



Oklahoma State Department of Health

NEWS RELEASE



FOR RELEASE:

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Oklahoma Fall Prevention Plan Finalized

As part of Oklahoma's Healthy Aging: Living Longer Better collaborative, a falls prevention work group was established to develop a state strategic plan to prevent falls among Oklahomans 65 years and older. The state plan, Preventing Falls Among Older Adults in Oklahoma, has now been finalized. Participants worked extensively to develop state and community action steps that achieve the goal of reducing the number of nursing home residents falling with major injury and reducing intentional fall-related deaths among persons 65 years and older in Oklahoma.

Commitments to action in the state plan are organized by four focus areas, which include:

- Tracking and Monitoring
- Policies and Procedures
- Public Education
- Provider/Prescriber Education

As a result of these commitments to action by partners of the Healthy Aging Collaborative, a fall prevention web portal has been created to centralize available resources. New and existing resources are available for both the community and providers to prevent falls, what to do after a fall, and how to talk about it. Many private partners and state agency representatives continue to work together to help Oklahomans live and age well. State Ombudsman William "Bill" Whited led the small task force responsible for the web portal.

"Collaborators from across practice settings met four times in 19 months," said Whited. "In that short time they created a strategy with actionable items to help our older adult population in Oklahoma prevent falls. Together, we have been able to do more than draft a report that sits up on a shelf."

The Healthy Aging Collaborative recognizes that the consequences of a fall can be devastating, resulting in serious injury or death, in addition to high medical costs. Successful implementation of the state plan will have a positive impact on the health and safety of older adults, and give them the ability to age in the community environment of their choice.

"The fall prevention work group of the Healthy Aging Collaborative continues to work hard to complete the action items presented in the state plan to prevent falls among older adults in Oklahoma," said Whited.

To receive more information on the state plan, Preventing Falls Among Older Adults in Oklahoma, and the Healthy Aging: Living Longer Better initiative, visit healthyaging.health.ok.gov or call (405) 271-5288.

To learn more about how to prevent falls, contact the Injury Prevention Service at (405) 271-3430 or visit falls.health.ok.gov.

Media requesting more information should contact Cody McDonell by emailing codym@health.ok.gov or calling (405) 271-5601.

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New Web Portal Makes Finding Fall Prevention Resources Easier

A new resource for preventing falls by older adults is now available. As part of Oklahoma's Healthy Aging: Living Longer Better initiative, the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH), the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS), and several private partners developed a web portal to assist the state's aging population and their families in finding resources to prevent falls. The resource web portal was created as a part of a collaboration of state agencies and a broad network of partners, including tribal nations and community organizations.

Every year, one out of three adults aged 65 or older experiences a fall, but less than half will tell their health care professional. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one out of five falls causes a serious injury such as broken bones or a head injury. Even if they are not injured, many individuals who experience a fall develop a fear of falling. This fear may cause them to limit their activities, which leads to reduced mobility and loss of physical fitness.

"This fall-prevention web portal is a valuable resource for our older Oklahomans," said Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin. "It connects older adults, their caregivers and family members, and health professionals with resources from across Oklahoma and around the world."

Healthy Aging: Living Longer Better kicked off with the Governor's Summit on Healthy Aging in 2014. The summit was a meeting of more than 300 individuals representing 75 organizations and agencies and served as a "call to collaborate." In 2016, the Governor's Healthy Aging Summit was attended by representatives of more than 80 organization and agencies. It concluded with the development and support of individual action plans for four focus areas. The current goals of the Healthy Aging initiative are to prevent falls, increase physical activity, reduce depression, and improve nutrition among older adults in Oklahoma.

"I appreciate all the partners who worked together to develop this informative portal," said Fallin. "Since my first Governor's Summit on Aging in 2014, efforts have been underway to improve the health and well-being of older Oklahomans."

For more information about the Healthy Aging: Living Longer Better collaborative, visit healthyaging.health.ok.gov online or call (405) 271-5278. To visit the Falls Prevention Portal, visit <http://ow.ly/2XBL30dJ4bK>. Media inquiries should be directed to Cody McDonell with the OSDH Office of Communications at (405) 271-5601.

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