State Policy Toolkit for Advancing Fall Prevention
Select Resources

*Every 15 seconds an older adult is treated in an Emergency Department for a fall related injury*

*Every 29 minutes, an older adult dies from a fall*
Inviting Physical Therapists to join us in preventing older adult falls

Be a part of an active movement to reduce falls and fall related injuries and deaths in older adults. Physical Therapists can play a unique role and contribute to healthy and safe aging for clients, community members, neighbors and family and friends. The American Physical Therapy Association is a member of the National Falls Free© Initiative, joining over 70 national organizations and 38 states all working together to address this growing public health issue: www.ncoa.org/fallsfreeinitiative

Facts About Falls

- **Widespread:** Falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries for those 65 and over; as baby boomers join the ranks of 65+, injuries and deaths will escalate. The chances of falling and of being seriously injured in a fall increase with age. In 2009, the rate of fall injuries for adults 85 and older was almost four times that for adults 65 to 74.

- **Very Expensive:** $30 billion a year is spent annually on treating older adults for the effects of falls: Fractures are both the most common and most costly type of nonfatal injuries:
  - Just over one third of nonfatal injuries are fractures, but they make up 61% of costs—or $12 billion.
  - In a study of people age 72 and older, the average health care cost of a fall injury totaled $19,440.
  - The average cost of a fall related hip fracture injury in 2006 was $37,000.

- **Often Fatal:** Each year, over 20,000 older adults die from falls. As an example, 90% of all hip fractures among older adults result from falls. The average hospital stay for a hip fracture is one week; 25% of those will need to stay in a nursing home for at least a year, with most of these significant costs typically paid by Medicaid. Within one year, up to 20% of hip fracture patients will die.

- **Prevention is Cost Effective:** In a soon to be published CDC study, costs and benefits of program delivery were calculated. Evidence-based fall prevention programs offer promising directions for simple, cost-effective interventions through eliminating known risk factors, offering treatments that promote behavior change, and leveraging community networks to link clinical treatment and social services. Integrated models linking the clinical intervention with community programs and services are being piloted and show promise. Randomized controlled trials of several community based programs have clearly demonstrated a reduction in falls: When compared with controls, the risk of falling in the tai chi intervention participants was decreased 55% and the Stepping on Program reduction was 30%. The Matter of Balance program has been shown through two randomized trials to accomplish its primary objective, which is to increase falls self-efficacy (i.e., perceived self-efficacy or confidence at avoiding falls during essential, nonhazardous activities of daily living). In the most recent study, by self report there were significantly fewer recurrent fallers in the intervention group.

Did you know that Physical Therapists and Assistants are being trained to offer or participate in community programs? Physical therapists will link their older adult patients to community programs as part of their care plan. Physical therapists are an integral part of the Stepping On program by serving as a guest expert for 3 out of 7 sessions. Physical therapists are part of many effective clinical multifactorial fall prevention programs, for example, the Yale FICSIT program, PROFET, and the Winchester Falls Project. Another effective falls
A prevention program that can be delivered alone or as part of a multifactorial program is the Otago Exercise Program.

The Otago Exercise Program is now ready for delivery in the home by physical therapists. APTA is joining with CDC in offering certification:

1. The Otago Exercise Program (OEP) has proven to effectively reduce falls by 35% when delivered to clients 80 years of age and older.

2. Integrating the OEP into your PT practice will result in better outcomes and fewer falls. Local physicians will be educated in this program and will be looking to refer patients to practices which offer this program.

3. The Otago Exercise Program is classified as an evidence-based falls prevention program. You can highlight this program in your marketing materials to increase your referral base.

4. Home Health Agencies are required by Medicare to have a falls prevention program, and the Otago Exercise Program is an accepted program, so agencies do not have to spend time re-inventing the wheel.

5. Outpatient physical therapists can use the Otago Exercise Program as a falls prevention intervention and receive reimbursement through Medicare’s quality improvement initiative (PQRI)

6. Therapists will receive free training in how to implement and sustain the OEP. Otago is now available as an online training program for physical therapists. Learn more/join the phconnect.org Otago Forum. The direct URL to the training hosted by the North Carolina AHEConnect Learning Management system is sponsored by the North Carolina Area Health Education Center Program and developed by the Greensboro Area Health Education Center. The training is approximately 3 hours, can be started and stopped. The nominal cost is $25 for which PTs will get 3 contact hours! 
   http://www.aheconnect.com/newahec/cdetail.asp?courseid=ceg3c

7. Opportunity to participate in a national project, receive free advertising through national organizations (the Centers for Disease Control, the American Physical Therapy Association, etc.)

8. To learn more about the program join www.phconnect.org community: Preventing Falls Among Older Adults where a myriad of resources are posted including the Otago Training Manual.

The American Physical Therapy Association is working hard to bring educational tools and resources to its members including continuing education opportunities and exciting articles highlighting the role of Physical Therapists and new community program opportunities. These are available on www.APTA.org; additional opportunities will be offered in the annual conferences. In addition to championing the role of therapists in fall prevention, APTA is also working to promote reimbursement for services in all venues.

Did you know we have an active Insert State here Coalition on Falls Prevention working with national partners to bring greater awareness and resources to this growing public health issue in our own state? Join us in this important collaborative effort - see what other states are doing: www.ncoa.org/fallsmatch

Did you know we participated in the Annual Falls Prevention Awareness Day in 2012 and will again in 2013? Learn how you can be involved. Join this important collaborative effort by contacting (e-mail address or website) today!
Inviting Occupational Therapists to join Us In Preventing Older Adult Falls

The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) and National Council on Aging (NCOA) invite you to be part of a growing national movement to reduce falls and fall related injuries and deaths in older adults. Occupational therapy practitioners (i.e., occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants,) play a unique role and contribute to healthy and safe aging for our clients, community members, neighbors and family and friends. AOTA is a member of the National Falls Free© Initiative, joining over 70 national organizations and 38 states all working together to address this growing public health issue. (Visit www.ncoa.org/fallsfreeinitiative and www.ncoa.org/fallsmap).

Facts About Falls

Widespread: At least 30% of older adults (i.e., people aged ≥65 years) living in the community fall each year, and the likelihood of falling increases rapidly with advancing age.

Often Fatal: Falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries for those 65 and over. Each year, over 20,000 older adults die from falls. 90% of all hip fractures among older adults result from falls.

Often Lead to Loss of Independence: Falls and concerns about falls can lead to disability among older adults. Although some concerns about falling are protective and keep a person from engaging in activities with demands that exceed abilities, many people who are afraid of falling enter a debilitating spiral of loss of confidence, restriction of activities, physical frailty, falls, and loss of independence.

Very Expensive: $30 billion a year is spent annually on treating older adults for the effects of falls: Fractures are both the most common and most costly type of nonfatal injuries.

• Just over 1/3 of nonfatal injuries are fractures, but they make up 61% of costs—or $12 billion.
• In a study of people ≥72 years, the average health care cost of a fall injury totaled $19,440.

Prevention Works and Is Cost Effective: Evidence-based fall prevention programs offer promising directions for simple, cost-effective interventions by addressing known risk factors, promoting behavior change, and leveraging community networks to link older adults seen in medical settings to effective programs available in the community. Likewise, occupational therapy practitioners’ commitment to fall prevention increasingly involves linking older adults to community-based programs designed to reduce fall risk. These programs include Stepping On (authored by an occupational therapist), Matter of Balance (co-authored by an occupational therapist), as well as the Otago Exercise Program and Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance.

Did you know that occupational therapists are being trained to offer or participate in community programs? Contact infow@wihealthyaging.org for information about Stepping On trainings and www.mainehealth/pfha for information regarding Matter of Balance trainings. Numerous additional resources are available to support occupational therapists in their efforts to help older adults make good activity choices to avoid falls and create home environments that support their safety and functioning. AOTA is working hard to bring fall prevention resources to its members including on-line continuing education opportunities, podcasts and articles in OT Practice and AJOT. These are available on www.AOTA.org; additional opportunities will be offered in AOTA annual conferences. In addition to championing the role of occupational therapy practitioners in fall prevention, AOTA is also working to promote reimbursement for services in all venues.