



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 19, 2022

State reminds seniors that one fall can be detrimentally life-changing

Fall prevention guidance for older adults to commemorate Adult Falls Prevention Week September 18-24

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) and Aging and Long-Term Services Department (ALTSD) join thousands of community-based organizations nationwide for [Falls Prevention Awareness Week](#), September 18-24, 2022, to provide prevention tools.

“One fall can change your life, particularly if you’re an older adult because, one fall can increase risk of hospitalization in older adults by 25 percent,” said **David R. Scrase, M.D.**, acting DOH secretary. “Prevention efforts are key to maintaining quality of life for older adults and one easy proactive item a person can do -- is to talk to their healthcare provider and find a good balance and exercise program.”

The [National Council on Aging](#) (NCOA) and the [CDC Foundation](#) are launching a new and improved [FallsFree CheckUp](#), an online tool to help older adults check their risk for a fall and learn how to reduce it.

Falls are the leading cause of injury related death for seniors. These injuries can be prevented and are not normally part of the aging process. 1 in 4 older adults fall every year. The percentage of New Mexicans over 65 is increasing and the need for fall prevention is growing with it. After falling, many people gain a fear of falling and become more sedentary, increasing their risk for a second fall. Falls are costly-- in 2015 more than \$50 billion in total medical costs were related to falling. The New Mexico Adult Falls Prevention Coalition suggests preventative steps to minimize the risks of falls:

- Get yearly eyeglasses, hearing and vision checks
- Speak with your physician about falls and your specific risk including any medications you take.
- Keep your home safe. Remove potential hazards, increase lighting and install grab bars in high-risk areas

- Stay physically active!

“We encourage our older adults and adults with disabilities to take whatever efforts they can to minimize their fall risk,” said **Katrina Hotrum-Lopez, ALTSO cabinet secretary**. “Taking preventative safety steps provides a way to maximize health and can help individuals stay in their home longer and be able to age in the community of their choice.”

Several programs exist throughout New Mexico to prevent falls. The [STEADI Toolkit](#) provides information in one place regarding strength and balance testing, medication management and home safety evaluations. Tai Chi for Arthritis for Falls Prevention has classes across the state to improve balance and overall wellbeing. The Matter of Balance program offers both online and in-person classes focusing on exercise and stability, plus increasing general activity levels.

[FallsTalk](#) is an individual program for anyone who has experienced a fall or regular loss of balance; regardless of walking ability, medical condition, mobility or fitness level. The program begins with a personal FallsTalk Interview in-home or community space to discuss their unique situation. The intervention consists of initial and follow-up interviews with a trained facilitator.

Otago is an exercise program facilitated by a physical therapist in the clinical or community setting. The intervention consists of two phases, the clinical phase and the self-management phase. The clinical phase is an eight-week instruction led by the physical therapist or physical therapy assistant. The self-management phase transitions into a four to ten-month period of self-care, practicing the exercises learned

in phase one, without led instruction. Please see our [Otago Program Brochure](#) to learn more.

Oasis Albuquerque is hosting several events at 3301 Menaul Blvd NE,

Suite 18, Albuquerque. For more information, please visit www.oasisabq.org

- September 19 Janet Simon, DPM, will present a falls prevention lecture [Foot](#)

[Health and Better Balance](#). There is a \$5.00 fee to attend the lecture.

- September 20 Janet Popp, PT, MS, NMAFPC Chair, will present [Avoid the Shuffle](#) to Prevent a Fall. There is a \$5.00 fee to attend the lecture.
- September 19 & 22 Free evidence-based falls prevention courses including Tai Ji Quan:
- Moving for Better Balance and A Matter of Balance. More information at www.pathstohealthnm.org

For more information about Adult Falls and how NM DOH is addressing the issue, please visit [OlderAdults \(nmhealth.org\)](https://www.nmhealth.org/olderadults).

###

NMDOH

Trevor Dermody, *Communications Specialist* | trevor.dermody@state.nm.us

The Department of Health works to promote health and wellness, improve health outcomes, and deliver services to all New Mexicans. As New Mexico's largest state agency, DOH offers public health services in all 33 counties and collaborates with 23 Native American tribes, Pueblos and nations.