

FALL PREVENTION

Falls are not a normal part of aging and falls can be deadly, especially in older adults.

- In 2015, the total cost of fall injuries in the US was **\$50 billion**¹
- Falls are also responsible for over **44% of all trauma cases** in the U.S.²
- Deadly falls are on the rise. Between 1999 and 2018, the rate of deaths due to falls among older adults increased by 114%³

Falls are a leading cause of death and disability in the U.S. and prevention efforts require a well-rounded approach

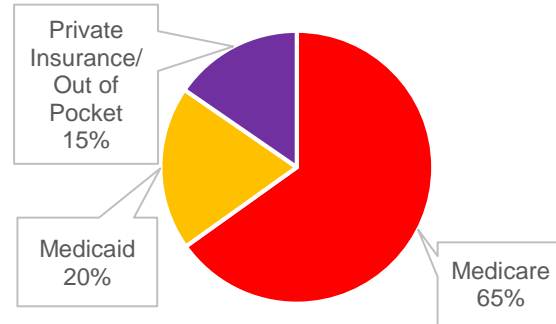
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The Cost of Falls in Maryland³

In 2014, falls among older adults cost Maryland an estimated **\$759 million** in direct medical costs.

Approximately 85% of those costs are covered Medicare and Medicaid Services.



Why do people fall?⁴

- Physical mobility problems (poor strength or balance, foot and ankle problems, arthritis, diabetes, and depression)
- Vision loss or low vision
- Medication issues (side effects from one drug or from a combination of drugs)
- Home and environmental factors

Prevention Strategies

This month, the National Council on Aging introduced a tool that older adults can complete before they visit their health care provider. The [Falls Free CheckUp](#) can help patients have a conversation about specific ways they can address their personal risk factors.

At home, older adults can decrease their risk of falling and decrease the injury caused by a fall by doing strength and balancing exercises at home regularly. Check with your health care provider or medical team for different ideas!

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1 The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web-based Inquiry Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS™) Retrieved August 20, 2020 from <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/>

2 American College of Surgeons, *National Trauma Data Bank 2016 Annual Report*. Retrieved August 20, 2020 from <https://www.facs.org/-/media/files/quality-programs/trauma/ntdb/ntdb-annual-report-2016.ashx>

3 Costs of Falls Among Older Adults. (2019, July 9). Retrieved August 20, 2020, from <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/fallcost.html>

4 Important Facts about Falls. (2019, July 9). Retrieved August 20, 2020, from <https://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreational/safety/falls/adultfalls.html>

TIME TO MEET: The Maryland Falls Free Coalition

By: [Donna Bilz](#)

In July 2009, **The Maryland Falls Free Coalition** was established to address the issue of falls in Maryland. The coalition's overarching goal is to reduce falls and fall related injuries among priority populations to improve quality of life.

Their **mission**: Reduce the risks of falls among all Maryland residents by increasing awareness, implementing sustained evidence-based initiatives, and promoting policies that reduce falls.

Their **vision**: Maryland citizens living active, independent, and fall-free lives. Individuals are encouraged to participate in fall prevention programs that focus on promoting healthy behaviors and creating safe environments.

Older adults can reduce their risk of falling by beginning a regular exercise program, making the home safer; having a health care provider review medications; and having their vision checked and corrected.

Effective falls reduction programs address these multiple risk factors. BCDA senior centers offer a wide variety of evidenced based fall prevention programs and ongoing classes, for more information go online to www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/aging/healtheducation



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES CONCERNING FALL PREVENTION

For information on statistics and resources that are made readily available to the public, please visit the following organizations:

[Maryland Access Point \(MAP\)](#) is the state's Aging and Disability Resource Center. It is a one-stop shop for people that are looking for long term support services. You can visit their website or call (410) 767-1100 or (847) 627-5465. Also available are resources for Home Medical Equipment and Drug Monitoring and Reminder Services.

[National Council on Aging \(NCOA\)](#) is a national resource that focuses on healthy aging. They have resources for professionals, older adults and caregivers, and advocates. They can also be reached at (571) 527-3900 and every year they host Fall Prevention Awareness Day to increase awareness about the danger of falls.

The [Maryland Living Well Center for Excellence](#) is a local resource that offers classes on how to improve self-management of chronic conditions. They have virtual and in person program offerings on how to promote health, prevent disease, and prevent falls.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Next Month: CHANA Baltimore will premiere VOICES: Stories of Survival, a virtual gathering for supporters and survivors of domestic violence and abuse in the Jewish Community.

Click [here](#) to register for this free virtual event.

December's Newsletter will highlight **Impaired Driving**. If you would like to contribute information, advertise an event/webinar, or highlight your organization, please email us at partnership.safer.md@gmail.com