Evidence-Based Falls Prevention Programs: Saving Lives, Saving Money

THE CHALLENGE: Older Adult Falls in the U.S.

- **1 in 3 Americans** aged 65+ **falls each year**
- **Every 13 seconds,** an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall
- **Every 20 minutes,** an older adult dies from a fall

Falls Are Common

- In 2013, the total cost of fall injuries was **$34 billion** (78% paid by Medicare)
- This total cost may reach **$67.7 billion** by 2020
- Even **falls without injury can cause fear** of falling, leading to physical decline, depression, and social isolation

Falls Are Costly

Falls in adults aged 65+ are the **leading cause** of **head injuries** and **broken hips**

THE SOLUTION: Proven Community-Based Programs

A Matter of Balance

8-session workshop to reduce fear of falling and increase activity among older adults in the community

- **97%** of participants feel more comfortable talking about their fear of falling
- **99%** of participants plan to continue exercising
- **$938** savings in unplanned medical costs per Medicare beneficiary

Otago Exercise Program

Individual program of muscle strengthening and balance exercises prescribed by a physical therapist for frail older adults living at home (aged 80+)

- **35%** reduction in falls rate
- **$429** net benefit per participant*
- **127%** ROI**

Stepping On

7-week program that offers older adults living in the community proven strategies to reduce falls and increase self-confidence

- **30%** reduction in falls rate
- **$134** net benefit per participant
- **64%** ROI

Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance***

Balance and gait training program of controlled movements for older adults and people with balance disorders

- **55%** reduction in falls rate
- **$530** net benefit per participant
- **509%** ROI

Falls Free®
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Learn more about these and other proven programs at ncoa.org/FallsPrevention

Sources:

Carande-Kulis, V., Stevens, J., Florence, C., Beattie, B.L., Arias, I. (2015). A cost-benefit analysis of three older adult falls prevention interventions. Journal of Safety Research, 52, 65–70.

Report to Congress in November 2013: The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Evaluation of Community-based Wellness and Prevention Programs under Section 4202 (b) of the Affordable Care Act. http://innovation.cms.gov/Files/reports/CommunityWellnessRTC.pdf

* Net benefit = Direct medical costs averted (e.g., emergency department visits, hospitalizations, rehab, homecare) after subtracting intervention costs

** ROI (return on investment) = Net benefit per participant divided by average cost of the program per participant; percentage of return for each dollar invested

***Now known as "Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance"

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