Healthy Aging Communication Network

Living Stronger & Longer

Falls among Arizonans 65 years and older, 2012

Unintentional Falls were the leading cause of injury-related mortality among Arizona residents 65 years and older.

Among 2012 hospitalizations and emergency department visits,
⇒ The average length of stay in the hospital was 4 days
⇒ The median charges for inpatient visits were $42,429, and totaled over $890.1 million ($70.4 million were charged to AHCCCS)
⇒ ED visits resulted in charges totaling over $443.7 million ($90.4 million were charged to AHCCCS)
⇒ These charges do not describe costs associated with physician care, EMS services, rehabilitation, or long-term disability.

Are falls preventable?
Yes. Many falls, particularly those among older adults, can be prevented using a comprehensive approach that addresses physical activity, medication usage, vision, and home environment.

What can be done to reduce the risk of unintentional falls?
* Maintain a regular exercise program to increase strength, balance, and coordination. Tai Chi classes are an evidence-based method.
* Regularly review medications with a healthcare provider, and safely dispose of prescriptions that are no longer needed.
* Have yearly eye exams.
* Modify home environments to reduce hazards such as slippery floors, poor lighting, and uneven surfaces.

Visit the Arizona Healthy Aging website at: http://www.azdhs.gov/phs/healthy-aging/

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