

March 16, 2018

The Honorable Tom Cole
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt
United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

The undersigned organizations are committed to protecting our older Americans and urge you to fund the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control programming and research to prevent older adult falls at a minimum of \$2 million, and the Administration for Community Living (ACL) engagement of the aging services network to implement and sustain evidence-based falls prevention programs at a minimum of \$5 million, for FY 2019.

Falls are not an inevitable part of aging in America yet they represent the leading cause of preventable death among adults 65 years of age and older. It is an escalating health risk for this population, but with sound research and science, more can be done to prevent fall-related injuries. In 2014, there were 29 million falls among adults over the age of 65, which is one fall every second of every day, and of those who fell, 37.5% reported requiring medical treatment or restricted activity for at least 1 day. In 2015, total medical costs to treat older adult falls exceeded \$50 billion. As the baby boomer generation continues to age, these injuries and associated costs are likely to increase substantially unless more is done.

The CDC houses the experience required to institute public health strategies to create a safety system for older adults. With the implementation of its Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths and Injuries (STeADI) toolkit, the CDC provides easy and effective resources for professionals who work with older adults daily, including physicians and pharmacists. They are also evaluating fall prevention strategies to help communities identify the best, evidence based efforts to prevent falls and keep older adults safe and independent.

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) is leveraging the CDC investment in provider training and program translation to improve access to evidence-based programs in local communities to prevent falls among older adults. These much-needed funds will expand access for seniors to attend programs that will identify and ameliorate risks and reduce health care costs associated with emergency room, physician, hospital and rehab visits. Older adult falls costs Medicare \$31 billion annually.

Attached is a state-by-state chart of the human costs associated with this preventable injury. As you can see, in the U.S. it ranges from a high rate in Arkansas of 34% of adults 65 years old and older to a low in Hawaii of 20%. According to CDC, the financial cost to the nation is great as well with Medicare spending \$31 billion annually to treat these injuries.

This funding request is such a small investment when compared with the return it could provide to maintain the safety, health and productivity of our older Americans. I hope you will join with us in support for this funding.

Sincerely,

American Occupational Therapy Association
American Physical Therapy Association
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
B'nai B'rith International
Brain Injury Association of America
Easterseals
Injury Prevention Research Center at Emory
Lorain County Public Health
Meals on Wheels America
Medicare Rights Center
National Alliance for Caregiving
National Association for Hispanic Elderly
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
National Association of RSVP Directors
National Association of State EMS Officials
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
National Council on Aging
National Indian Council on Aging
National Safety Council
National Senior Corps Association
PatientLink Enterprises
Prevention Institute
Safe States Alliance
Society for the Advancement of Violence and Injury Research
The University of Oklahoma Department of Family and Preventive Medicine
ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation
Trust for America's Health
Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging

TABLE 2. Percentages and rates* of falls and fall injuries† in the preceding 12 months reported by adults aged ≥65 years (N = 147,319), by states ranked by percentage of older adults reporting ≥1 fall — Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, United States, 2014

| State | No. reporting a fall [§] | % (95% CI) | No. of falls reported (thousands) | Rate [¶] (95% CI) | No. reporting a fall injury | % (95% CI) | No. of fall injuries reported (thousands) | Rate ^{**} (95% CI) |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Overall | 43,958 | 28.7 (28.2–29.1) | 29,000 | 672 (648–695) | 16,083 | 10.7 (10.4–11.0) | 7,000 | 164 (156–171) |
| Arkansas | 727 | 34.3 (31.6–37.0) ^{††} | 377 | 868 (725–1011) ^{††} | 275 | 11.5 (9.9–13.4) | 79 | 183 (148–218) |
| Alaska | 324 | 32.9 (29.0–37.0) ^{††} | 65 | 940 (683–1197) ^{††} | 114 | 11.9 (9.4–15.0) | 12 | 178 (128–227) |
| Michigan | 901 | 32.6 (30.5–34.8) ^{††} | 1,216 | 810 (671–949) | 323 | 11.4 (10.0–13.0) | 265 | 177 (137–217) |
| Missouri | 865 | 32.4 (29.9–35.0) ^{††} | 741 | 823 (639–1008) | 326 | 12.9 (11.2–14.9) ^{††} | 187 | 208 (150–266) |
| Montana | 908 | 32.2 (29.7–34.7) ^{††} | 137 | 824 (670–977) | 351 | 12.1 (10.5–13.9) | 27 | 163 (139–187) |
| Kentucky | 1,174 | 32.1 (29.7–34.6) ^{††} | 473 | 770 (660–880) | 445 | 11.9 (10.3–13.6) | 108 | 176 (145–208) |
| Wyoming | 836 | 32.1 (29.7–34.5) ^{††} | 65 | 831 (668–994) | 276 | 10.5 (9.1–12.2) | 15 | 196 (122–270) |
| Indiana | 1,272 | 31.8 (29.9–33.7) ^{††} | 685 | 762 (659–864) | 441 | 11.0 (9.8–12.3) | 156 | 174 (142–207) |
| Oregon | 626 | 31.8 (29.4–34.4) ^{††} | 495 | 822 (684–960) ^{††} | 251 | 12.3 (10.6–14.2) | 145 | 241 (125–357) |
| Vermont | 561 | 31.7 (29.2–34.3) ^{††} | 78 | 777 (646–909) | 197 | 11.1 (9.5–12.9) | 15 | 151 (126–177) |
| Iowa | 887 | 31.5 (29.5–33.7) ^{††} | 322 | 686 (604–767) | 289 | 9.9 (8.7–11.3) | 70 | 149 (118–179) |
| Washington | 1,120 | 31.2 (29.3–33.2) ^{††} | 813 | 840 (652–1028) | 406 | 10.5 (9.3–11.8) | 150 | 155 (131–179) |
| Oklahoma | 920 | 30.9 (28.9–32.9) ^{††} | 488 | 891 (706–1075) ^{††} | 322 | 11.1 (9.9–12.6) | 120 | 219 (122–315) |
| California | 613 | 30.7 (28.0–33.5) | 3,134 | 801 (631–970) | 225 | 12.4 (10.4–14.8) | 807 | 207 (156–257) |
| Kansas | 1,321 | 30.5 (28.9–32.0) ^{††} | 292 | 735 (619–851) | 455 | 10.4 (9.4–11.4) | 76 | 191 (106–275) |
| Texas | 1,504 | 30.2 (27.9–32.7) | 1,906 | 654 (563–745) | 551 | 11.4 (9.9–13.2) | 476 | 164 (136–191) |
| Tennessee | 600 | 30.1 (27.5–32.8) | 685 | 737 (614–860) | 213 | 11.4 (9.6–13.4) | 166 | 179 (131–228) |
| Ohio | 1,209 | 30.1 (28.0–32.3) | 1,210 | 688 (610–767) | 452 | 10.4 (9.1–11.9) | 259 | 147 (124–171) |
| District of Columbia | 427 | 30.1 (26.9–33.4) | 51 | 687 (548–826) | 155 | 11.7 (9.5–14.3) | 13 | 175 (121–230) |
| Maine | 1,014 | 29.9 (27.9–31.9) | 195 | 836 (640–1032) | 327 | 9.3 (8.1–10.5) ^{§§} | 35 | 151 (116–185) |
| Idaho | 586 | 29.9 (27.2–32.8) | 154 | 697 (600–794) | 201 | 10.6 (8.8–12.7) | 37 | 170 (131–209) |
| Utah | 1,049 | 29.6 (27.8–31.6) | 192 | 668 (591–744) | 383 | 10.5 (9.3–11.8) | 43 | 149 (126–172) |
| Alabama | 925 | 29.4 (27.3–31.6) | 524 | 733 (630–836) | 342 | 10.7 (9.4–12.3) | 121 | 170 (134–206) |
| South Carolina | 1,097 | 29.2 (27.4–31.1) | 553 | 749 (623–874) | 431 | 11.4 (10.2–12.8) | 155 | 211 (140–281) |
| Massachusetts | 1,591 | 28.6 (26.8–30.5) | 588 | 611 (532–689) | 613 | 10.6 (9.5–11.9) | 146 | 152 (127–177) |
| Pennsylvania | 1,083 | 28.6 (26.7–30.5) | 1,208 | 588 (524–651) ^{§§} | 380 | 9.9 (8.7–11.2) | 271 | 132 (114–151) ^{§§} |
| Georgia | 615 | 28.6 (26.2–31.1) | 769 | 649 (560–738) | 227 | 10.5 (8.9–12.2) | 190 | 160 (124–196) |
| South Dakota | 720 | 28.5 (25.6–31.6) | 74 | 577 (473–681) | 242 | 9.7 (8.0–11.8) | 18 | 143 (103–183) |
| Nebraska | 2,235 | 28.2 (26.8–29.6) | 187 | 701 (614–789) | 751 | 9.9 (9.0–10.9) | 39 | 146 (120–172) |
| Delaware | 441 | 28.1 (25.4–31.0) | 97 | 660 (495–826) | 160 | 10.0 (8.3–12.0) | 21 | 143 (112–175) |
| Mississippi | 457 | 28.1 (25.3–31.0) | 282 | 674 (526–822) | 163 | 8.9 (7.4–10.6) ^{§§} | 55 | 133 (98–167) |
| North Carolina | 642 | 28.0 (25.9–30.2) | 868 | 616 (543–688) | 234 | 10.0 (8.7–11.6) | 237 | 168 (132–205) |
| New Hampshire | 619 | 28.0 (25.5–30.6) | 131 | 649 (530–768) | 228 | 9.6 (8.2–11.3) | 33 | 162 (108–217) |
| New Mexico | 828 | 27.8 (25.5–30.2) | 190 | 661 (567–755) | 294 | 10.2 (8.7–11.9) | 46 | 158 (125–192) |
| Wisconsin | 505 | 27.8 (24.9–30.9) | 496 | 690 (470–911) | 192 | 10.1 (8.3–12.2) | 104 | 145 (111–179) |
| New York | 547 | 27.7 (25.2–30.3) | 1,598 | 584 (507–661) ^{§§} | 205 | 10.7 (9.1–12.6) | 422 | 154 (126–183) |
| Arizona | 1,722 | 27.5 (26.0–29.1) | 676 | 707 (591–824) | 677 | 10.4 (9.4–11.5) | 142 | 148 (130–167) |
| Illinois | 457 | 27.4 (24.7–30.3) | 1,058 | 610 (485–736) | 178 | 11.1 (9.3–13.2) | 277 | 160 (125–195) |
| North Dakota | 732 | 27.2 (24.8–29.7) | 71 | 677 (539–815) | 264 | 9.5 (8.1–11.2) | 15 | 145 (101–188) |
| Colorado | 1,107 | 27.1 (25.4–28.8) | 374 | 601 (515–688) | 395 | 9.4 (8.4–10.5) ^{§§} | 85 | 137 (115–158) ^{§§} |
| Nevada | 386 | 26.9 (23.6–30.5) | 233 | 605 (475–735) | 141 | 9.8 (7.8–12.2) | 76 | 198 (124–272) |
| Rhode Island | 550 | 26.8 (24.4–29.3) | 90 | 566 (457–674) | 219 | 10.2 (8.6–12.0) | 24 | 150 (113–186) |
| West Virginia | 536 | 26.6 (24.4–28.9) | 208 | 642 (533–751) | 206 | 9.9 (8.5–11.6) | 48 | 149 (121–177) |
| Connecticut | 661 | 26.5 (24.2–29.0) | 263 | 496 (425–567) ^{§§} | 266 | 10.3 (8.8–12.1) | 79 | 149 (117–182) |
| Minnesota | 1,185 | 26.1 (24.5–27.6) ^{§§} | 448 | 591 (514–669) | 415 | 9.0 (8.0–10.1) ^{§§} | 105 | 139 (114–164) |
| Virginia | 700 | 25.6 (23.5–27.8) ^{§§} | 602 | 534 (468–600) ^{§§} | 265 | 9.9 (8.5–11.4) | 154 | 137 (112–162) ^{§§} |
| Florida | 1,060 | 25.1 (23.4–26.9) ^{§§} | 2,087 | 599 (513–686) | 440 | 10.4 (9.3–11.7) | 526 | 151 (129–174) |
| Maryland | 1,179 | 25.1 (23.1–27.2) ^{§§} | 405 | 506 (437–576) ^{§§} | 418 | 8.1 (7.0–9.3) ^{§§} | 93 | 116 (98–134) ^{§§} |
| Louisiana | 530 | 24.9 (22.7–27.1) ^{§§} | 365 | 591 (511–670) | 193 | 8.6 (7.3–10.1) ^{§§} | 92 | 150 (108–191) |
| New Jersey | 937 | 23.6 (21.6–25.7) ^{§§} | 653 | 525 (421–629) ^{§§} | 397 | 10.2 (8.9–11.8) | 187 | 151 (111–190) |
| Hawaii | 467 | 20.8 (18.5–23.4) ^{§§} | 85 | 399 (331–467) ^{§§} | 169 | 7.0 (5.6–8.6) ^{§§} | 18 | 83 (66–101) ^{§§} |

Abbreviation: CI = confidence interval.

* Number of falls in the preceding 12 months.

† An injury caused by a fall in the preceding 12 months that caused respondents to limit their regular activities for ≥1 days or to go see a doctor.

§ Unweighted number of older adults reporting a fall. Because of varying question-specific nonresponse, sample sizes vary among questions.

¶ Number of falls per 1,000 adults aged ≥65 years.

** Number of fall injuries per 1,000 adults aged ≥65 years.

†† Significantly higher than the overall percentage or rate.

§§ Significantly lower than the overall percentage or rate.