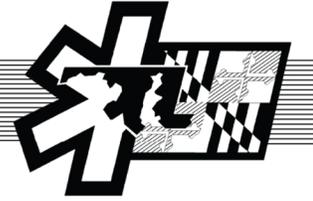


News RELEASE



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Maryland Highlights Falls Prevention for Seniors

Baltimore, MD (September 16, 2011) — According to the Maryland Trauma Registry, almost one quarter of the total number of all patients admitted to Maryland Trauma Centers in 2010, were admitted for injuries due to falls. The percentage of fall victims has increased from 24 % in 2009 to 26.7% in 2010. Of those patients admitted for falls, 41% were aged 65 and older. To bring awareness to the dangers of falling, September 18-24, 2011 has been designated as Falls Prevention Awareness Week. Events are taking place statewide to bring attention to this concern.

“Injuries from falls are far more dangerous than most people realize,” said Robert R. Bass, MD, Executive Director of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS). “Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers are the first to see the severity of injuries that occur due to falls and many of these can be prevented by reducing risk factors.”

There are four major risk factors for falls in older adults: lack of exercise, vision problems, medication side effects, and home/environmental hazards.

There are four basic steps you can take to reduce your risk of falls:

- **Begin a regular exercise program.** Exercise improves strength and balance, as well as coordination.
- **Have your health care provider review your medicines.** Some medicines or combinations of medicines can make you sleepy or dizzy and cause you to fall.
- **Have your vision checked.** Have your eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year. Poor vision can increase your chances of falling.
- **Make your home safer.** Remove tripping hazards like books and papers from stairs. Remove small throw rugs or use double-sided tape to hold them in place. Install grab bars next to your toilet and shower.

For more information about how to prevent falls, contact your local fire/EMS company or the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s Office of Injury Prevention and Health Promotion at 410-767-6779.

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