



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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**STATE DOH TO LAUNCH SENIOR FALL PREVENTION  
AWARENESS CAMPAIGN JUNE 16 - AUGUST 30, 2017**

**GOAL IS TO REDUCE INJURIES AND FATALITIES AMONG ELDERLY**

HONOLULU – Fall-related injuries and fatalities among Hawaii’s seniors have reached alarming levels. On average in Hawaii, 94 seniors die each year from fall-related injuries, 1,940 are hospitalized and 8,050 are taken to emergency rooms.

Statistics from the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) Emergency Medical Services & Injury Prevention Branch show that falls disproportionately affect the elderly and that those age 65 and older are the most vulnerable. In addition to emotional and physical impacts on seniors and their caregivers, falls take a heavy financial toll on Hawaii’s families and the healthcare system, with estimated hospital costs associated with injuries sustained by falls accounting for nearly \$120 million a year.

To combat these alarming statistics, the DOH will launch a senior fall prevention awareness campaign from June 16 - August 30, 2017. The campaign will feature a broadcast educational video about fall prevention, new public service announcements, free medication reviews, balance tests, *tai chi* workshops and community presentations that focus on preventing falls among older adults.

“We appreciate the many partners that have come together to increase awareness and prevention of falls among our seniors in Hawaii,” said Dr. Virginia Pressler, DOH Director. “This is an important public health issue and we must raise awareness to prevent the tragedy and hardship that injuries from falls can bring to families in our state.”

The DOH offers the following advice to seniors, their family members and caregivers to prevent falls and fall-related injuries:

- Have your doctor or pharmacist review your medications yearly
- Get an annual eye exam
- If you live alone, get a life-saving Personal Electronic Safety Device
- Make your home safer by removing fall hazards and improving lighting
- Exercise regularly to increase balance and flexibility. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, exercise programs such as Tai Chi for Health can increase strength and improve balance, making falls much less likely.

“Preventing falls is an important year-round effort,” said Stan Michaels, DOH Fall Prevention Coordinator. “By putting in place a few simple precautions and making basic changes to the home environment, seniors can enjoy life, fall-free.”

Hawaii’s senior fall prevention program was recognized as “the finest public awareness campaign in the nation” at the White House Conference on Aging/ 2016 NCOA National Falls Prevention Resources Conference in Alexandria, Virginia.

The DOH and the Hawaii Fall Prevention Consortium are sponsoring the campaign in collaboration with Foodland Supermarkets, Times Supermarkets, KTA Superstores, Safeway Supermarkets, Kaiser Permanente, the Hawaii Community Pharmacy Association, Project Vision Hawaii and City Mill.

The Hawaii Fall Prevention Consortium was founded in 2003 with support from DOH’s Injury Prevention and Control Program. The consortium includes government agencies, professional associations, non-profit organizations, hospitals, care facilities and senior organizations.

### **Free Medication Reviews and Balance Tests**

According to Catalina Cross, Director of Pharmacy for Times Supermarkets, nearly 220 in-store pharmacists from the Hawaii Community Pharmacy Association and the other organizations will conduct in-store reviews of seniors’ medications, as well as balance tests to determine fall risk and support senior health and well-being.

### **Project Vision Hawaii Partners with the Fall Prevention Consortium**

On Friday, June 16, Project Vision Hawaii and the Fall Prevention Consortium will offer free eye tests and vision screening at the Lanakila Multi-Purpose Senior Center from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Project Vision Hawaii is the state’s only mobile eye and health screening service, bringing fully equipped Vision Vans to locations statewide. Visit the Project Vision Hawaii website at <http://www.projectvisionhawaii.org/> for additional information.

### **“Fall-Proof” Senior Assistive Safety Devices at Home**

City Mill in Kaimuki will host “meet-and-greet” sessions with the public on July 8 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to offer home safety recommendations. City Mill in Pearl City will hold a similar event on July 15 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Home safety specialists from the DOH will be present at both events to answer questions about the latest senior assistive safety devices to help make a home as “fall-proof” as possible.

### **Tai Chi for Arthritis/Fall Prevention Classes**

From June to August, Tai Chi for Health, arthritis and fall prevention classes will be offered at more than 33 locations statewide. For more information, call (808) 733-9202 or go to the DOH website at: <http://health.hawaii.gov/injuryprevention/home/preventing-falls/tai-chi/>.

See the attached fact sheet for other resources and activities taking place during the state's upcoming senior fall prevention awareness campaign.

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## **FACT SHEET**

### **2017 Senior Fall Prevention Awareness Campaign**

The 2017 Senior Fall Prevention Awareness Campaign will include the following activities and resources:

#### **Fall Prevention Tips**

Beginning June 16, more than 66 stores and clinics statewide representing nine major market, pharmacy and hardware corporations will distribute 69,000 “bag-stuffers” that contain fall prevention tips for seniors plus information on additional resources.

#### **Fall Proof Home Safety Video Produced by Kaiser Permanente**

In partnership with the Fall Prevention Consortium, Kaiser Permanente Hawaii has produced a home safety video demonstrating how to make a home “fall proof” for seniors. The video can be shown during home visits by social workers and for playback in clinic waiting rooms. Kaiser Permanente will continue to offer medication reviews, regular eye and hearing checkups, and provide outreach programs that provide recommendations for fall-proofing homes and advice on how to stay active.

Additional information and fall prevention support for Kaiser members can be found at [www.kp.org/healthyaging](http://www.kp.org/healthyaging) or by calling the Kaiser Prevention and Health Education Department for a free listing of programs and classes. On Oahu, call (808) 432-2260; on Maui, (808) 243-6484; and on Hawaii Island, (808) 933-4510.

#### **Public Service Announcements**

During July and August, public service announcements on fall prevention will air on KHON, KGMB, KHNL, KITV and KIKU.

#### **Fall Prevention Video Re-Broadcasts**

Olelo (Community Access Television) will feature “Hana Hou” re-broadcasts featuring the two award-winning educational videos, “*Senior to Senior*” and “*Caregiver to Caregiver*,” which give a detailed demonstration of what everyone can do to help prevent falls for seniors. Visit Olelo’s website for broadcast times in July and August. To request a presentation or if your organization would like a copy of the videos, e-mail [stanley.michaels@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:stanley.michaels@doh.hawaii.gov).

#### **Community Presentations**

From June through August 2017, Stan Michaels from the DOH’s EMS and Injury Prevention System Branch, and Michael Dowell, Chair of the Fall Prevention Consortium, will give presentations to various senior organizations and community groups around the state.

The presentations will feature the new broadcast KHON TV special “*Fall Prevention: Securing Senior Safety and Independence*,” featuring fall prevention tips, plus new information gathered by Michaels and Dowell during the White House Conference on Aging-2017 NCOA National CDSME and Falls Prevention Resources Conference in Alexandria, Virginia. Hawaii was honored in 2016 as having “the finest senior fall prevention public awareness campaign in the nation.”

Go to <http://health.hawaii.gov/injuryprevention/home/preventing-falls/information/> or call (808) 733-9202 for more information about fall prevention for seniors.

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