



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

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**KUPUNA FALL PREVENTION AWARENESS ACTIVITIES
BEGIN SEPT. 22**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention Systems Branch and the Hawai'i Fall Prevention Consortium, in collaboration with the Queen's Medical Center, FOODLAND Supermarkets, MINA Pharmacies, TIMES Supermarkets, and KTA Superstores, are sponsoring Kupuna Fall Prevention Awareness Week activities from September 22 to 30, 2012. The week coincides with National Fall Prevention Awareness Day on September 22, established by Congress.

"One average every five hours in Hawai'i a senior suffers a fall injury so serious he or she must be hospitalized," said Director of Health Loretta Fuddy. "Fall prevention is a major concern for the safety and well-being of our beloved kupuna, the fastest growing segment of our population."

Falls and fall-related injuries impact individuals, families, and the community at large, and the health care system. Fall incidents increase dramatically in the years after age 65, and those who have fallen once are much more likely to fall again. Every year in Hawai'i, an average of 108 kupuna die, 1,840 are hospitalized and 5,715 are treated in emergency departments due to falls, resulting in almost \$118 million in hospital and physician charges. Adding the costs of rehabilitation and nursing care can double that amount.

"We are very excited about the commitment to senior well-being exhibited by our partners: The Queen's Medical Center, FOODLAND Supermarkets, MINA Pharmacies, TIMES Supermarkets, and KTA Superstores," said Dr. Linda Rosen, Chief of Emergency Medical Services and the Injury Prevention Systems Branch. "By conducting free in-store reviews of seniors' medications, pharmacists will be providing a much-needed and valued service that can help prevent serious and tragic accidents."

Throughout the week, partnering pharmacies will be offering free medication reviews, and "Fall Prevention Tips for Seniors" bag-stuffers will be distributed statewide by participating stores. Sponsor newsletters will also include fall prevention stories and tips, and magnets with fall prevention messages will be available.

Kupuna fall prevention tips include exercising regularly to increase balance and flexibility, having your doctor or pharmacist review medications yearly, having eyes checked annually, and making the home safer by removing fall hazards, installing safety devices like railings and grab bars, and improving lighting. For more information about fall prevention for kupuna, contact the DOH fall prevention coordinator at (808) 733-9202.

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