

The OPINE (Asterhill's Blog)

Winter Series: "Senior Falls"

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COMMUNITY HEALTH: *Seniors Falls*

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A senior falls and becomes injured every 17 seconds, and one senior dies from a fall every 30 seconds in the United States (NCIPC, 2006). The associated medical costs with these deaths exceed \$380 million dollars and total health care cost for seniors falls is over \$23 billion in 2005 (CDC). Taking simple precautions could reduce these injuries and cost by 40% (CDC, 2008). It's estimated by 2020 cost of fall injuries will exceed \$54 billion. Over 40% of the housing occupied by seniors in the United States is not safe (CDC, 2011).

I would bet that everyone knows a senior who has fallen at home and had difficulty getting help. It could be a relative, friends, or parent. I work part time as an EMT and many of our calls are to render aid to seniors. There are program in your communities to get senior help. Check with your town and counties offices.

Some communities have created NORCs (Natural Occurring Retirement Communities). A NORC is a community group that provides resources for elderly and their families to improve the quality of life (Asterhill, 2009). An example is providing transportation for seniors to get to medical appointments or grocery stores, or assist them in making physical modifications to a dwelling.

There are several intervention strategies underway by CDC. They have under taken an aggressive education program of prevention. There program is targeted at seniors, family members, health care givers, regional Public Health, and medical professionals (CDC). CDC's communication methods encompass a vertical approach. While the CDC's program is making gains, many low income seniors fall between the cracks. An intervention strategy to catch these elderly would be to strengthen the community relationship between municipalities, community organizations, and health care providers (Hood, 2005).

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