

## StopFalls Napa Valley Top Successes and Outcomes

StopFalls Napa Valley was launched out of the Healthy Aging Initiative when initiative partners working together in the spirit of collaboration to build senior friendly communities and policies identified falls among seniors as a key health issue to be addressed. In April 2006, the Archstone Foundation awarded a coalition grant to the Area Agency on Aging Serving Napa and Solano with support from Fall Prevention Center of Excellence. The coalition began a planning process, conducted a needs assessment, and developed a 3-year strategic plan. A survey of community providers serving seniors revealed significant gaps in fall prevention policies, programs and services and illuminated provider interest and priorities for the plan to establish Napa's first fall prevention program, launched in 2007 through funding from Queen of the Valley Medical Center and County of Napa Tobacco Settlement Agreement Funds. Identified priorities included community education and awareness, coordination among health care and other providers, provider education and training, centralized resource and referral for fall prevention and intervention services, falls surveillance, reporting and institutional and community policies.

### Response to a major public health concern:

A 2006 EPIC injury data report prepared by the California Department of Public Health reveals a significant public health problem in Napa County indicating the need to take immediate steps now to reduce falls:

- 55% of all unintentional injuries in Napa County are due to falls
- 43% 407 of the 936 unintentional injuries in Napa were due to falls among older adults age 60 and older
- 79% of all fall related injuries in Napa County were among older adults age 60 and older

(2006 Nonfatal Hospitalized Unintentional Injury data for Napa County Residents)

Queen of the Valley Medical Center fall related patient incidence data analysis (ran April 2009) reveals an increasing public health crisis:

- **1,297 (unduplicated) patients age 60 and over were treated for fall related injuries in 2008:**
  - 720 patients treated in ER had Medicare Insurance
  - 328 patients treated in ER did NOT have Medicare Insurance, (of those 119 were age 65 years and older), other payor source unknown in this database
  - 249 patients were treated for falls in Inpatient care for whom payor type was not available in this database
- **1,282 (unduplicated) patients age 60 and over were treated for fall related injuries in 2007:**
  - 656 patients treated in ER had Medicare Insurance
  - 376 patients treated in ER did NOT have Medicare Insurance, (of those 181 were age 65 years and older), other payor source unknown in this database
  - 250 patients were treated for falls in Inpatient care for whom payor type was not available in this database

**Note: This reflects data from Queen of the Valley Medical Center only and further research is needed to determine payor source for these patients.**

**SFNV made rapid progress towards developing a countywide network of resources to respond to unmet needs.** The Napa Fall Prevention Coalition formed a multidisciplinary team of 37 volunteers with a shared vision to significantly reduce falls among older adults in Napa Valley,

with core members who signed formal letters of commitment to service. The Coalition continues to grow in membership with collaborative and in-kind services provided by a cross-section of community providers representing government, non-profit, for-profit sectors, and senior advocates.

***Leadership and Coordination.*** The coalition is rich with community leaders representing numerous disciplines. All three hospitals actively participate on the coalition including the Medical Director of Community Outreach Department at Queen of the Valley Medical Center, Director of Community Services for St. Helena Hospital (who also serve as spokespersons for StopFalls Napa Valley), and the Health Educator for Kaiser Permanente Hospital). Physical therapists, occupational therapists, home care service providers, physical activity specialists, adult day providers, case managers, outreach coordinators, home modification/DME providers, emergency responders, outreach coordinators, dieticians and long term care representatives actively participate. Agencies include California Veteran's Home, Napa Housing Authority, transportation agencies, volunteer services, Latino Elder Coalition, Ombudsman, Health & Human Services, RCFE & skilled nursing homes. The Napa Fall Prevention Coalition continues to incorporate the Fall Prevention planning into our cross-cutting initiative underway through the Napa Healthy Aging Population Initiative (HAPI).

The Coalition conducted a review of existing data which revealed that Napa has a higher than average incidence in falls among seniors that result in injury or death and that data collection about falls is not adequate for measuring change or gaining a full understanding of the extent of the problem.

#### **The purpose of the coalition**

- Advocate for and engage community partners to support fall prevention policies and practices within institutions, organizations, and communities.
- Increase community awareness by conducting outreach and education activities.
- Support the aims of the strategic plan, specific annual objectives of the Coalition and key activities of the Fall Prevention Program staff.
- Develop and revise the strategic vision and plan for fall prevention in Napa Valley.
- Assess the progress and gaps in fall prevention in Napa Valley.
- Support the fund development activities.

#### **The Cost of Falls in Napa County**

Each year nearly 500 Napa seniors have injuries from falls serious enough to cause hospitalization at a mean cost of \$40,000 per patient resulting in serious injury, death, loss of independence and reduced quality of life. Most falls occur in the home and likelihood of returning home post hospitalization declines with age. This does not include the cost of falls to a community such as EMS response and 911 calls. The Napa Fire Department estimates that the majority of its calls are fall-related assists. From January 1, 2000 to July 23, 2008 the City of Napa Fire Department responded to 3,316 patients' calls in which falling was listed as "Cause of Injury/Illness", 402 patients in year 2007 alone. Napa City ranks high (#30 out of 308 cities) compared to other municipalities in the nation for number of hospitalizations due to hip fractures per 1000 Medicare enrollees. In addition to physical injuries, falls produce other serious consequences for older persons such as placement in costly and restrictive long term care facilities, significantly reduced post fall activity, depression, anxiety and isolation.

The StopFalls Napa Valley project has gained statewide recognition. We are very proud to announce that StopFalls Napa Valley has been vetted by The Fall Prevention Center of Excellence (FPCE) and UCLA for a potential pilot evaluation project embedding evidence-based multifaceted fall prevention interventions in the community. FPCE provides in-kind technical support from their team of experts in each of the multi-factorial areas of expertise; Medical

Management-risk assessment and follow-up, Balance and Mobility-Physical Activity and Environmental Modification-Home Modification.

### **StopFalls Napa Valley Goals**

1. To improve fall prevention knowledge and behaviors among seniors and caregivers through community education
2. To improve interventions, coordination, policies and procedures throughout Napa County to prevent injuries from falls, reduce repeat injury and address risk factors
3. To reduce falls in homes and care facilities due to unsafe conditions or practices
4. To improve availability, access to and use of physical activity at multiple risk levels
5. To improve safety and accessibility through walkability audits, general plan recommendations and institutional policy change

### **StopFalls Napa Valley Strategies**

Community education and events

- Media
- Grassroots Outreach
- Education Materials and Website
- Community Education and screening programs

Promoting physical activity to maintain & improve balance and mobility

- Resource and referral lists for multiple abilities
- Evidence-based physical activity programs for vulnerable, frail and isolated seniors

County-wide Fall Prevention Coordination

- Post Fall Follow-up & Assistance
- Resource & Referral
- Professional Training & Education
- Institutional and Community Policies
- Home Safety Assessment and Affordable Modification Data Collection

## **OUTCOMES**

### **Building linkages and identifying strategies for improving systems:**

A Fall Prevention Planning Summit included nearly 75 seniors, health care providers, community providers, and others attending to build community support for fall prevention and the coalition from which the strategic plan was developed.

### **Building awareness and increased knowledge through education:**

StopFalls Napa Valley launched a social marketing campaign including 4 PSAs, two of which are currently running on KVON, newspaper columns and presentations.

On July 18, 2008 Joann Busenbark featured fall prevention on her Cable Access TV show. In Joann's own words "Until the Coalition started I had no idea about the risk of falls for seniors". StopFalls Napa Valley spokespersons Dr. Hitchcock of QVMC and Linda Schulz of SHH were her guests. The show aired twice a week during August to Napa, American Canyon, and Yountville cable subscribers, and a tape of the show was provided to Calistoga's cable access

station. NCTPA placed bus boards announcing the show in all their Vine buses and at the transit station. Flyers announcing the show were distributed widely through meals on wheels home meal delivery drivers to **225 homebound seniors** and to mobile home parks, including **110** Rancho Casitas senior home park residents in American Canyon.

In June 2008, the [www.StopFallsNapaValley.org](http://www.StopFallsNapaValley.org) website was launched.

### **Outreach and education:**

Targeted community education and awareness efforts to improve knowledge and behaviors related to fall prevention reached **5,250** people in Napa County to date where prevention and health promotion information and materials were also handed out: including fall prevention brochures, home safety checklists, physical activity and a list of sites where senior physical activities are held in Napa, and health risk factors for falls, including rural and isolated seniors. Among the sites include:

Napa Senior Center  
Napa Creek Manor  
Laurel Manor  
St. Helena Senior Center – Rianda House  
Napa Library  
Calistoga Mobile Home Parks  
Rianda House Senior Center  
St. Helena Library  
Calistoga Chateau mobile home park clubhouse  
Calistoga Rancho De Calistoga mobile home park clubhouse  
Calistoga Springs  
Laurel Manor senior apts presentation  
Napa Creek Manor (Health Promotion, Fall Prevention & Disaster Prep. education)  
The Reserve Napa clubhouse  
Napa County library on outreach days  
Jefferson Street Senior Apartments  
American Canyon Mobile Home Parks (2)  
The Meadows Independent Living, Assisted Living, Skilled Nursing Facility  
Veteran's Home of Yountville  
Napa Health, Safety, & Nutrition meeting  
Clinic Ole  
Elks Club  
Eye Works  
Veteran's Home  
Napa County Medical Society Alliance  
United Methodist Church  
OakTree Vineyards

### **Building collaborative partnerships to reach out to diverse targeted populations:**

- Provided education for over **600** seniors residing in low-income housing developments.
- Fall prevention education was provided to **115** caregivers in collaboration with the Napa Institute on Aging's Family and In-home Caregiver Education Workshops provided in October 2007, May 2008, and January 2009.
- Provided education and screening for over **1,249** seniors at health fairs, senior centers, and community events such as farmer's markets.

- Provided comprehensive fall prevention education program classes to **97** residents living in senior housing developments.
- Balance and Mobility screening events: screened and advised **230** at risk seniors.
- Collaborated with FORE to sponsor two Fall Prevention/Bone Health Expos drew **145** attendees (**75** in Napa and **70** in St. Helena Rianda Senior Center) who benefited from balance and mobility assessments conducted by Physical Therapists, osteoporosis bone density screenings conducted by FORE, interactive exercise demonstrations from exercise physiologists (safe chair exercise strength training using stretch bands), Tai Chi demonstration from a whole team of older adult students from senior peer Michelle Dwyer's established class popular with seniors and a St. Helena Tai Chi instructor. Speakers including Dr. Hitchcock, Dr. Grigsby, Linda Schulz, Bruce McCall and Kathleen Cody. Attendees reviewed their medications and filled out File of Life cards with pharmacists and spoke with experts on home modification and safety, safe footwear, and physical activity for multiple abilities and were able to sign up for services. Seniors received home safety checklists and fall prevention materials, night lights, stretch bands and accompanying illustrated exercise cards. Napa Valley Physical Therapy and St. Helena Hospital's physical therapists provided gait & balance screenings at the events
- Outreach to the Latino community: StopFalls Napa Valley Coalition collaborated with The Latino Elder Coalition to cosponsor two Interactive Fall Prevention education events. One in St. Helena on November 9<sup>th</sup> at the new Rianda Upper Valley Senior Activity Center. The event was held following Sunday mass. Over **160** invitations were mailed out to the homes of low-income and Clinic Ole Clients who are Latino elders with **45-50** participants attending. The purpose of the event was to introduce and welcome Latino elders to the senior center, explore activity preferences, evaluate site for future balance and mobility physical activity classes taught in English and Spanish. Two occupational therapists facilitated interactive stretch band exercises. The other successful Latino Outreach and Education event was held in August 2008 at Kennedy Park Pelusi site for **over 200** Latino elders and their caregivers. Low-income Latino Elders were targeted and received personal invitations (all Latino Clinic Ole low income clients over 60 years old and caregivers of older adults, MSSP clients, Community Outreach/Care Network clients and others many of whom are also served through IHSS). The event was also published in the local newspapers and announced on the radio.
- StopFalls Napa Valley collaborated with the Latino Elder Coalition LEC at the August 2007 Binational Health Fair providing education/informational materials, home safety checklists,
- Fall prevention outreach and education was integrated into a series of disaster planning workshops co-sponsored by RedCross and Area Agency on Aging where **499** seniors were educated and received fall prevention materials along with their disaster planning kits.
- StopFalls Napa Valley Coalition partnered with FORE to co-host a fall prevention community education and screening event at the St. Helena Rianda House Senior Center to **70** participants who received bone health and gait & balance screenings, medication mgmt assistance and exercise demonstrations

### **New Website Launched**

Community education is also available through the StopFalls Fall Prevention Website [www.stopfallsnapavalley.org](http://www.stopfallsnapavalley.org). featuring Stopfalls Napa Valley's strategic plan, resources to identify risks for falls, home safety checklist, fact sheets on preventing falls, balance and mobility, multi-factorial resources for service providers: 1) balance training and physical activity, 2) medical management, 3) environmental/home modifications: Balance Assessment Handbook; three videos on conducting three types of Balance and Mobility Assessments; CDC Fall Prevention Toolkit; Designing Safe and Effective Physical Activity; Patient's Guide to Fall Prevention; What will One in Every Three Seniors Suffer This Year? Includes facts about falls in

older persons and an online directory of senior care pharmacists across the U.S. and Canada; Pharmacist Intervention Can Prevent Falls article suggesting options for pharmacy services to help decrease the risk of falls associated with specific medications, medication combinations and more; Health of Seniors article provides answers to FAQ about falls reviewed by the Harvard Medical School; Falls prevention best practice guidelines for public hospitals and state government residential aged care facilities publication identifies three key components of falls prevention programs for care facilities and hospitals: risk identification, falls prevention, and injury prevention strategies; Best Practices in Nursing Care to Older Adults; Home Environmental Assessment Checklist; Home Health Care Management document covers multifactorial fall risk assessment and intervention for community dwelling seniors and the role of home health agencies; and many other comprehensive resources and links.

The public awareness social marketing campaign continues. KVON continues to run two PSAs taped by Dr. Hitchcock of Queen of the Valley Hospital and Linda Schulz of St. Helena Hospital who serve as spokespersons for the Fall Prevention coalition and we continue to receive requests for taped copies of the Napa Cable Access TV show aired repeatedly throughout month of August. Coalition members also arranged to have the tape aired several times at the Veteran's Home of Yountville.

#### **The launch of Napa County's first Fall Prevention Program**

StopFalls Napa Valley hired Fall Prevention Coordinator, Denise Bleuel, and Fall Prevention Occupational Therapist, Pam Marietti, in August 2008, and began coordinating and conducting in-home fall prevention assessments in October 2008:

The StopFalls Napa Valley Fall Prevention Program developed service protocols and forms, and provided the following direct services from October 08– March 09:

- ✓ 164 people contacted SFNV Fall Prevention Program
- ✓ 50 clients were referred to SFNV by 13 different agencies and organizations and received direct service coordination assistance and/or comprehensive fall prevention assessments
- ✓ 5 clients self-referred themselves to SFNV
- ✓ SFNV staff made 235 coordination contacts providing direct services, arranged services, linkage to other services, and/or information & assistance
- ✓ 25 clients were linked to other support services
- ✓ SFNV fall prevention program coordinated with a minimum of 40 other agencies and organizations
- ✓ 20 clients received comprehensive fall prevention home assessments conducted by SFNV Occupational Therapist
- ✓ A minimum of 88 fall prevention interventions were provided to clients to help keep them safely in their homes, including:

Rugs removed

Grab Bars Installed

Ramps installed

Clients enrolled in balance & mobility programs

Clients referred for med mgmt consults

Home lighting grades completed

Raised toilet seats

Bath benches

Handrails

Total adaptive balance & mobility equipment provided = 53

Other adaptive home safety recommendations and follow through:

Unsafe sidewalk repaired  
Added smoke alarm  
Added phone jack for safer access  
Medical Alert Systems  
Declutter - 2 clients decluttered homes  
Phone communication access – safe access  
Non-slip surface added to ramps  
Paving-outside uneven surface was paved per recommendation  
Electric Lift  
Roll in shower  
Kitchen island modification for safe access  
New floor transitions  
Stair steps marked for visibility  
Chair with arms replaced chairs without arms for safe transfers  
Referral to Alcohol Rehab Programs  
Items moved from high cabinets to safe accessible cabinets  
Unsafe door removal recommended and follow-through  
Access: Removed bathroom door  
Materials and resource information about tobacco cessation

Note: For clients who did not have resources or insurance to cover modifications, referrals were made to organizations or resources that provide services and/or equipment at no cost to low income seniors. StopFalls assisted with interventions when no other resources or options were available.

#### **Strategies to impact systemic change in a community:**

In February 2008, SFNV trained 78 professionals participating in a train-the-trainer fall prevention workshop, many of who are implementing fall prevention education and practices and integrating fall prevention policies and procedures into their agencies. The February Training invitation was issued to a list of 200 community providers and agencies. Coalition members made follow-up calls to encourage registration for the day-long training. CECs for Nursing and Behavioral Health were provided.

November 2008 survey of participating agencies yielded positive fall prevention changes to policies and practices among 50% of the agencies:

**89%** of provider participants have incorporated the training lessons into their agency  
**26%** of providers have referred clients to SFNV for assessment or other services  
**42%** of providers have visited the new SFNV website  
**37%** of providers have already used the tools for providers available on the new website

Changes made as a result of training in their own words:

- “We have improved our initial fall assessment, follow up teaching/interventions, and incorporated a fall assessment risk scale (modified Morse Scale) on all our clients. We have also implemented a how to prevent falls brochure for all of our clients and fall prevention check list (room to room) for those that are at high risk. We also provide the take 5 exercise hand out for our client's that are mostly chair bound and need strengthening.
- In doing home assessments for long term care insurance clients receiving care, I determine what caused their falls if any and discussed ways to prevent them.
- I had already been doing fall prevention education in my home visits, home safety assessments and health and physical activity. Have provided balance exercises for clients.

- We are continuing to work on all aspects of our fall prevention. Glad to see the coordination of services in NV through the coalition is really coming together.
- Information was shared with staff and with clients and with my mom :)
- Give each new patient a fall prevention brochure, discuss falls more with each patient.
- We were already doing all these things, but have sharpened our focus on fall prevention.
- In addition to providing the info. in two kiosks in our clinic buildings (for Healthy Aging Month), I am planning to incorporate the info. into a class that I will teach here in 2009: \"Fitness Over 50\".
- Mostly in a discussion and training capacity.
- Implemented exercise group to strengthen lower body strength/improve balance/flexibility. At one month, noticed a large improvement in our residents; they were very motivated to get more fit after putting the focus of the group on fall prevention and how increasing strength/flexibility can help
- Following training, Concordia/Rohlf's Manor Senior Housing development will be offering on-site balance & mobility strength training classes on-site through the Adult School, open to greater Napa community and will be advertised in the Napa Valley Adult Ed. Catalogue, with a start date targeted for Jan.'09.
- Falls risk/home safety assessments & prevention education.
- Better prevention and exercise programs to improve strength and flexibility
- Our Care Network teams are doing home evaluations for fall risk based on what they learned at the conference.
- SFNV also received an email testimonial in April from another Care Network of Queen of the Valley Medical Center employee:

Here's an update on what CARE Network has done since we all attended the fall prevention training in February:

- **Intake** packets: We now hand out and discuss a "What YOU Can Do To Prevent Falls"
- Nursing **assessments**: we now use a Fall Risk Scale, modified from the Morse Fall Scale (we previously had a much shorter fall evaluation tool).
- **Follow up**: when needed, we have an additional pamphlet, "Check for Safety, a home fall prevention checklist for older adults" that we use when patients need more assistance. We found out about these pamphlets from your training, and were able to order them in English and Spanish at no cost.

As you may already know, we have 4 RN's and 4 Social Workers in our program working with chronically ill patients of all ages.

Thanks for the good work you're doing,

Julie Penning, MA

Social Worker, CARE Network

Queen of the Valley Medical Center

**Other Systemic changes to policies and procedures underway as a result of StopFalls Napa Valley's education and advocacy include:**

**Multipurpose Senior Service Program,** carrying a case load of 200 clients, integrated fall prevention into their intake/assessment/follow-up procedures. Intake packages now include StopFalls Napa Valley brochures, home safety checklists, and prevention tip sheets from CDC and Fall Prevention Center of Excellence. A *fall assessment questionnaire* has been integrated during the client's *initial assessment*, *Level of Care assessment* conducted every six months, quarterly home visits and *annual reassessment*. MSSP Clients tend to score in the high risk category and are monitored for falls and behavioral change at minimum on a monthly basis.

**Linkages Program,** carrying a caseload of 100 clients, also integrated fall prevention into their initial assessment, quarterly home visits, and monthly monitoring practices. All self-reported falls and other fall related information is charted in the client's case notes, so a fall history can be constructed, and referrals are made as appropriate.

**Family Caregiver Support Program** has begun to integrate fall prevention into their program, providing fall prevention information and resources to caregivers.

**Community Action of Napa Valley's Nutrition CANV programs** (Congregate Dining, Home Meal Delivery, and Napa Food Bank's Senior Brown Bag program) and **Volunteer Center's Senior Services** programs agreed to provide fall prevention brochures, educational materials, physical activity resources and self assessment tools such as a home safety checklist to all new and existing clients through their home delivery drivers, congregate meal and brown bag distribution sites and friendly home visitor programs. This strategy has potential for reaching thousands of seniors, many isolated and living in rural areas. In fiscal year July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008, these programs served 1,416 seniors.

In August, 2008 SFNV program coordinator Denise Bleuel, coordinated with Napa Nutrition Home Meal delivery drivers who personally reached out to homebound seniors by delivering packets of fall prevention information, home safety checklists, and night lights to 225 homebound seniors.

### **Gatekeeper Education**

In collaboration and coordination with a HAPI education initiative and Napa Institute on Aging, home meal delivery drivers and other gatekeepers who come in contact with isolated and homebound seniors in the course of their work will be trained to identify and refer seniors who are at risk for falls.

Fall prevention was included in the family and in-home caregiver education workshop provided through the Institute on Aging to 115 participants to date.

### **Education Toolkits Developed:**

#### **StopFalls Napa Valley developed three education toolkits which include evidence-based tools:**

- 1) Community Awareness and Advocacy toolkit to inform professionals, community members, funders, and policymakers about StopFalls Napa Valley and help raise awareness about prevalence and risk of falls
- 2) Senior Education toolkit with specific tools, strategies, and tips on how to prevent falls
- 3) Medical Practice education toolkit for use in presentations to medical practices to encourage medical practitioners to integrate fall prevention practices into their visits and policies and procedures

#### **Two other curricula developed from evidence-based research that StopFalls Napa Valley is using includes:**

- Balance & Mobility Physical Activity Train-the-trainer curriculum was developed by Fall Prevention Center of Excellence
- Live Strong & Safe Train-the-trainer: toolkit focuses on home modification/safety, medication management, exercise, and nutrition

**Note on Data Source:** Hospitalized fall injury data came from 2004 California Patient Discharge Data, supplied by the California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development in partnership with the California Department of Health Services, EPIC Branch. All injury records contain an external cause of injury code, which enables researchers to analyze incidence of hospitalized fall injuries. Fall injuries were identified using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision E-code Series, "Accidental Falls", E880-E886, E888. For denominator populations, we used California Department of Finance population estimates and Census 2000 data.

