



News Release

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GRANT TO HELP FIGHT LEADING CAUSE OF INJURIES AMONG OLDER ADULTS

(RICHMOND, Va.) — A three-year grant to the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services aims to help prevent falls, the leading cause of injuries and deaths from injury among older Americans.

The \$554,525 grant from the federal Administration for Community Living will expand Virginia's falls prevention programs for older adults, including those with early dementia. In addition to increasing the availability of the workshops and prevention awareness among the Commonwealth's roughly 1.2 million adults over age 65, the grant will help establish a coalition to spearhead a concerted effort to substantially reduce the threat.

“As someone who has an aging parent, I know from personal experience that it can take an older person months, if not longer, to recover from the injuries a fall can cause,” said Sec. of Health and Human Resources Dr. Bill Hazel. “We want to do everything we can to spread awareness that falls are more dangerous as we age, and that there are steps we can take to reduce the chance of falls, and this new grant will help us do that.”

“Falls threaten older adults' independence as well as their safety,” said Marcia DuBois, director of DARS' Division for the Aging. “We can reduce the number of falls through simple lifestyle adjustments, prevention programs and community partnerships, such as the effort that will be supported by the new grant.”

Each year, falls lead to more than 2.8 million injuries among older adults treated in emergency rooms, with 800,000 hospitalizations and more than 27,000 deaths, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [National Falls Prevention Day](#) is Sept. 22.

The new grant will offer or expand falls prevention workshops, focusing on underserved populations and regions of Virginia, with a goal of serving almost 2,000 older adults. Of those older Virginians, 390 will be individuals with early-stage dementia, who are at greater risk for falls, and their caregivers.

DARS is partnering on the prevention effort with Area Agencies on Aging, Alzheimer's Association chapters, the Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Network, Southwestern Virginia Fall Prevention Coalition, and LeadingAge Virginia. Once a prevention coalition is established, the grant will support a series of annual conferences and a statewide summit where grant partners and others can develop plans to sustain their prevention work.

The grant will allow the Commonwealth's wellness program for older adults, "Live Well, Virginia!" to incorporate the falls prevention program into its curriculum, greatly increasing the number of adults reached. This wellness program is offered throughout the Commonwealth through AAAs and other partners.

The AAAs joining the falls prevention partnership this year include:

- Central Virginia Alliance for Community Living
- District Three Governmental Cooperative
- Loudoun County Area Agency on Aging
- Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Inc.
- Peninsula Agency on Aging
- Prince William Area Agency on Aging
- Senior Connections, the Capital Area Agency on Aging
- Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia
- Southern Area Agency on Aging
- Mountain Empire Older Citizens
- Valley Program for Aging Services

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The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, in collaboration with community partners, provides and advocates for resources and services to improve the employment, quality of life, security, and independence of older Virginians, Virginians with disabilities, and their families. For more information, visit www.vadars.org or follow DARS on Facebook at www.facebook.com/vadars or Twitter at @vadars.