

Older Adult Safety

Preventing falls and other in-home injuries



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The Challenge

Falls among older adults can cause serious injuries, such as hip fracture or concussion, and threaten their health and independence. There are a number of factors that put older adults at higher risk for falls, including use of medications, vitamin D deficiency, and vision problems.

Falls among older adults lead to higher costs in healthcare for treatment of injuries, hospitalization, and recovery. Older adult falls are preventable through fall risk screening and counseling, strength and balance exercises, and home safety assessments.

In the South Central region, females age 85 and over are at higher risk for fall related injuries and death compared to other older adults.

Females age 85 and over account for 59.0% of older adults age 85 and over in the region. An estimated 1,060 females age 85 and over live in the region with 67.5% living in the towns of Salem, Derry, and Londonderry.

Older Adult Falls

The South Central region ranks ninth in the state (out of thirteen regions) for older adults age 65 and over who have fallen at least once. In 2014, an estimated 4,604 older adults experienced a fall in the region

an increase of 23.6% from 2012. 57.0% of those estimated falls were among females.¹

Fall Related Deaths

The South Central region ranks eighth in the state for fall related deaths among older adults age 65 and over. Between 2010-2014, there were 58 cases of fall related deaths among older adults in the region. 51.7% of fall related deaths were among females. When accounting for age, 56.9% of fall related deaths were among older adults age 85 and over of which 60.6% were among females. From 2010 to 2014, older adult fall related deaths remained the same.²

Fall Related Treatment

The South Central region ranks sixth in the state for fall related emergency department visits among older adults age 65 and over. Between 2005-2009, there were 3,344 cases of fall related emergency department visits among older adults in the region. 65.8% of fall related emergency department visits were among females. When accounting for age, 25.3% of emergency department visits were among older adults age 85 and over of which 67.6% were among females. From 2005 to 2009, fall related emergency department visits among older adults increased by 35.8% in the region.³

Fall Related Hospitalizations

The South Central region ranks fourth in the state for fall related hospitalizations among older adults age 65 and over. Between 2005-2009, there were 842 cases of fall related hospitalizations among

¹ Adults who have experienced a fall (age 65 and over), 2014, [New Hampshire WISDOM](#).

² Fall related deaths (age 65 and over), 2010-2014, [New Hampshire WISDOM](#).

³ Fall related emergency department visits (age 65 and over), 2005-2009, [New Hampshire WISDOM](#).

older adults age 65 and over in the region. 71.0% of fall related hospitalizations were among females. When accounting for age, 34.3% of hospitalizations were among older adults age 85 and over of which 77.5% were among females. From 2005 to 2009, fall related hospitalizations among older adults increased by 38.3% in the region.⁴

Fall Related Hip Fractures

The South Central region ranks third in the state for fall related hip fracture hospitalizations among older adults age 65 and over. Between 2005-2009, there were 381 cases of hip fracture hospitalizations due to a fall among older adults age 65 and over in the region. 73.2% of fall related hip fracture hospitalizations were among females. When accounting for age, 40.4% of fall related hip fracture hospitalizations were among older adults age 85 and over of which 78.6% were among females. From 2005 to 2009, fall related hip fracture hospitalizations decreased by 7.4% in the region.⁵

Older Adults in the Region

It is estimated that **by 2020, individuals age 65 and over will account for 17.2% of the population in New Hampshire**, which represents a 77.0% increase from the year 2000. **By 2030, individuals age 65 and over will account for 21.4% of the statewide population**, which represents a 138.4% increase from the year 2000. As the number of older adults living in the community increases, so does the potential for older adult falls and other in-home injuries.

⁴ Fall related inpatient hospitalizations (age 65 and over), 2005-2009, [New Hampshire WISDOM](#).

⁵ Hip fracture inpatient hospitalizations due to a fall (age 65 and over), 2005-2009, [New Hampshire WISDOM](#).

Older Adults by Age & Gender

Older adults age 65 and over represent 12.6% of the total population in the South Central region. 54.2% of older adults in the region are female. When accounting for age, 59.7% of older adults are age 65-74. The towns of Atkinson (16.7%), Hampstead (16.4%), Salem (15.5%), Plaistow (13.6%), and Windham (13.1%) have a higher proportion of older adults compared to the region. 60.7% of older adults live in the towns of Salem, Derry, and Londonderry.

Older adults at higher risk of fall related injuries and death (age 85+) represent 10.3% of the older adult population in the South Central region. The towns of Derry (14.1%), Windham (13.0%), and Salem (11.9%) have a higher proportion of older adults age 85 and over compared to the region. 69.9% of older adults age 85 and over live in the towns of Salem, Derry, and Windham.⁶

Table 1: Older Adults by Age and Gender

Town	Total Population	65-74	75-84	85+	Older Adult Total	Male 85+	Female 85+	Total 85+
Atkinson	6,788	622	424	85	1,131	54	31	85
Chester	4,802	322	131	15	468	0	15	15
Danville	4,423	226	174	34	434	19	15	34
Derry	33,180	1,858	1,107	485	3,450	214	271	485
Hampstead	8,543	935	364	99	1,398	36	63	99
Londonderry	24,247	1,892	574	164	2,630	64	100	164
Plaistow	7,614	527	406	103	1,036	53	50	103
Sandown	6,133	325	187	40	552	0	40	40

⁶ Demographic and Housing Estimates (DP05), 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, [U.S. Census Bureau](#).

Town	Total Population	65-74	75-84	85+	Older Adult Total	Male 85+	Female 85+	Total 85+
Salem	28,841	2,720	1,222	533	4,475	189	344	533
Windham	13,943	953	633	238	1,824	107	131	238
Region	138,514	10,380	5,222	1796	17,398	736	1,060	1,796

Older Adults Households

19.9% of occupied housing units in the South Central region have an older adult age 65 and over as the householder. 57.7% of older adult households have a householder age 65-74 compared to 10.2% of older adult households with a householder age 85 and over. The towns of Windham (16.4%), Derry (14.7%), and Salem (12.2%) have a higher proportion of older adult households with a householder age 85 and over. 76.1% of older adult households with a householder age 85 and over are in the towns of Salem, Derry, and Windham.⁷

Table 2: Older Adult Households

Town	Total Households	Older Adult Households	65-74	75-84	85+
Atkinson	2,597	656	357	255	44
Chester	1,612	270	196	68	6
Danville	1,537	237	133	89	15
Derry	12,934	2,071	989	777	305
Hampstead	3,447	875	545	274	56
Londonderry	8,750	1,594	1187	328	79
Plaistow	2,949	653	344	280	29
Sandown	2,130	289	128	138	23

⁷ Tenure by Age of Householder (B25007), Universe: Occupied housing units, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, [U.S. Census Bureau](#).

Town	Total Households	Older Adult Households	65-74	75-84	85+
Salem	11,093	2,640	1560	759	321
Windham	4,987	1,085	547	360	178
Region	52,036	10,370	5,986	3,328	1,056

Older Adults Living Alone

24.1% of households in the South Central region have one or more older adult age 65 and over. The towns of Hampstead (31.0%), Atkinson (28.6%), Salem (27.8%), Plaistow (27.1%), and Windham (26.3%) have a higher proportion of older adult households than the region. 60.2% of older adult households are in the towns of Salem, Derry, and Londonderry.⁸

32.7% of older adult households in the region have an older adult who lives alone of which 68.0% are female. The towns of Derry (41.0%), Hampstead (40.0%), and Salem (33.7%) have a higher proportion of older adults living alone than the region. 63.2% of older adults who live alone are in the towns of Derry, Salem, and Londonderry. The towns of Chester (77.5%), Hampstead (77.3%), Derry (72.6%), and Londonderry (70.0%) have a higher proportion of older women who live alone than the region. 63.5% of older women who live alone are in Derry, Salem, and Londonderry.⁹

⁸ Households by Presence of People 65 Years and Over, Household Size and Household Type (B11007), Universe: Households, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, [U.S. Census Bureau](#).

⁹ Non-family Households by Sex of Householder by Living Alone by Age of Householder (B11010), Universe: Non-family households, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, [U.S. Census Bureau](#).

Table 3: Older Adults Living Alone

Town	Total Households	Older Adult Non-Family Households	Live Alone 65+	Live Alone (male)	Live Alone (female)	2+ persons
Atkinson	2,597	744	173	71	102	571
Chester	1,612	364	89	20	69	275
Danville	1,537	287	63	31	32	224
Derry	12,934	2,556	1,049	287	762	1,507
Hampstead	3,447	1,069	428	97	331	641
Londonderry	8,750	1,910	506	152	354	1,404
Plastow	2,949	798	245	82	163	553
Sandown	2,130	418	90	29	61	328
Salem	11,093	3,086	1,039	384	655	2,047
Windham	4,987	1,314	420	158	262	894
Region	52,036	12,546	4,102	1,311	2,791	8,444

The Solutions

Public safety, healthcare providers, and agencies that serve older adults can reduce and prevent fall related injuries and deaths among older adults by coordinating to:

- Screen older adults annually for fall risk, including medications, vitamin D deficiency, and vision problems.
- Assess older adult homes for fall and other safety risks.
- Counsel older adults to reduce their risk of fall related injuries.
- Offer exercise programs for older adults.

Assessment, Training & Interventions

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed the Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths, and Injuries (STEADI) toolkit for healthcare providers. The toolkit includes an older adult self-assessment tool, patient materials, a screening tool and algorithm, and strategies for counseling older adults about fall prevention. Additionally, STEADI includes a webinar and instructional videos on implementing the program in a healthcare setting or at a community health and safety event. CDC also published a compendium of effective fall interventions and a guide to implementing effective fall prevention programs.

The Northern New England Geriatric Education Center (NNEGEC) supports an MD Falls Assessment Trainer to provide falls assessment training to healthcare providers.

Health Improvement Action Plan

In order to reduce and prevent fall related injuries and deaths among older adults, the South Central Public Health Network proposes to:

- Assess the status of fall prevention services, resources, and training in the region.
- Train community partners on fall prevention strategies.
- Coordinate with community partners to dissemination information to older adults on fall risk reduction and prevention.
- Coordinate with community partners to implement effective fall interventions with older adults (screening, counseling, exercise, and in-home assessment).

The Public Health Advisory Council supports the following goals, objectives, and activities to prevent fall related injuries and death among older adults and to reduce their consequences in the South Central region.

Goals, Objectives & Activities

Goal 1: Enhance and sustain fall prevention activities in the region.

Objective 1	Establish a Fall Prevention Workgroup (by January 2017).
	Activity: Identify key community partners to participate in the Workgroup.
	Activity: Conduct quarterly (at minimum meetings).
	Activity: Implement and evaluate the Fall Prevention Action Plan.

Goal 1: Enhance and sustain fall prevention activities in the region.

Objective 2	Determine the suitability of fall prevention activities in the region.
	Activity: Identify existing community resources for fall prevention.
	Activity: Identify staff who are trained in fall prevention strategies.
	Activity: Determine gaps in fall prevention activities and training.
	Activity: Identify existing community health and safety events for older adults.
	Activity: Publish and maintain a regional directory of fall prevention resources.

Goal 2: Decrease fall related injuries and deaths among older adults (especially older adults age 85 and over).

Objective 1	Promote awareness of fall related injuries and death among older adults.
	Activity: Promote <u>Falls Awareness Prevention Day</u> .
	Activity: Promote <u>self-assessment</u> of fall risk among older adults.
	Activity: Participate in at least one community health or safety event for older adults.

Goal 2: Decrease fall related injuries and deaths among older adults (especially older adults age 85 and over).

Objective 2	Coordinate with healthcare providers and community partners to implement fall prevention strategies.
	Activity: <u>Screen older adults</u> at risk of fall injuries (especially older adults age 85+).
	Activity: Counsel older adults (especially age 85+) on fall risk reduction strategies.
	Activity: Assess in-home fall hazards for older adults at high risk of fall injuries.

Goal 2: Decrease fall related injuries and deaths among older adults (especially older adults age 85 and over).

Objective 3	Conduct training on fall prevention screening, counseling, and home safety assessments.
	Activity: Participate in the New Hampshire <u>Fall Risk Reduction Task Force</u> .
	Activity: Participate in the state <u>Fall Risk Reduction Annual Conference</u> .
	Activity: Promote <u>online STEADI training</u> to healthcare providers.