



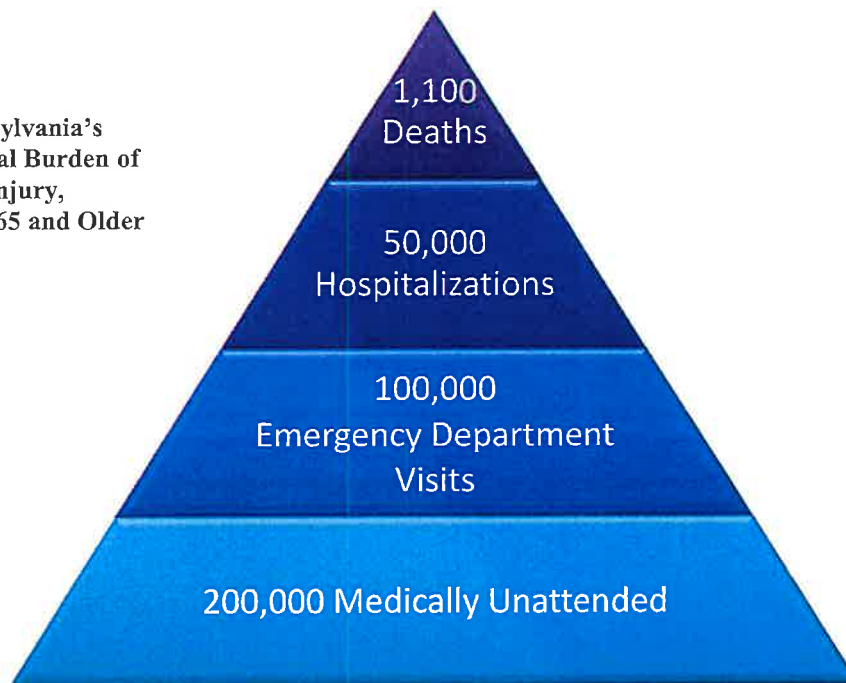
Did you Know... every year, more than 1/3 of adults age 65+ have a fall, with approximately 1/3 of fallers sustaining an injury? Research indicates that people who fall are 2-3 times more likely to fall again, and each fall increases the likelihood of more serious injury or death.

Pennsylvania Falls Facts

- Every 11 minutes an elder Pennsylvanian is hospitalized for a fall related injury.
- Falls are the leading cause of injury death for older Pennsylvanians, averaging 3 deaths every day.
- Falls are the leading cause of hip fractures in Pennsylvania, one of the most costly admissions.
- 71% of all injury-related hospitalizations in older adults are due to a fall.
- In 2005, the average hospital length of stay for persons 65 years of age or older was 5.8 days.
- In 2009, the financial burden of older adult falls was calculated through hospitalization charges of over \$2.16 billion; the quality of life and caregiving costs to individuals, families and communities is incalculable.

Fall Deaths are Only the Tip of the Iceberg

**Pennsylvania's
Annual Burden of
Fall Injury,
Ages 65 and Older**



Fall injuries that cause death in Pennsylvania are only the tip of the injury iceberg...

The largest numbers of people with fall injuries are those who do not go to see a doctor, receive no medical care, or treat themselves.

Reference: Deaths and Hospitalization from Pennsylvania, 2009. ED visits estimated from 2006 national rates. Unattended estimated from 2010 PA BRFSS.

- **Pennsylvania ranks among the top five states in the nation for the percentage of residents over age 65 and the total number of residents over age 65, matched only by Florida.**
- **Projections indicate that by 2015 the number of residents over age 65 is expected to grow nearly 10 percent (200,000 people).**
- **As the population ages, the impact and cost of fall-related deaths and injuries will increase dramatically unless this serious public health issue is addressed effectively.**



Pennsylvania Responds

Falling is NOT an inevitable result of aging. Through evidence-based interventions, practical lifestyle adjustments, and community partnerships, we can substantially reduce the number of falls. Pennsylvania is taking action to prevent falls through the following initiatives:

- In 2005 the Pennsylvania Violence and Injury Prevention Program published a monograph entitled **Fall-Related Injuries in Pennsylvania**, for the first time bringing the magnitude of this growing public health issue to light.
- A State Summit was held in 2008 to bring key partners together, share data regarding the burden of injury and the monograph, build consensus on the implementation and evaluation of evidence based interventions to reduce fall related injuries across the lifespan and begin work on the Pennsylvania Statewide Injury Prevention and Control Plan. The Summit drew attendees from sectors representing public health, aging, health care, and private and civic organizations.
- In March 2009 the Injury Community Planning Group developed a fall prevention action plan for Pennsylvania with goals to 1. Cultivate awareness, increase knowledge and educate health care providers, older adults and other key stakeholders on older adult fall prevention strategies, and 2. Build capacity for effective fall prevention efforts in Pennsylvania.
- In support of Goal 1, the Pennsylvania Violence and Injury Prevention Program in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians hosted a well attended continuing medical education webinar entitled “Reducing the Risk of Falls in the Elderly”.
- In support of Goal 2, the Department of Health and Aging are both implementing fall prevention programs. The Department of Health has implemented a program called “A Matter of Balance”, which is an evidence-based program designed to help people manage concerns about falls and increase physical activity. The Department of Aging also offers a falls prevention program called “Healthy Steps for Older Adults” which is designed to raise awareness and assess risks for falls; provide activities to reduce falls; improve home safety; and increase physical activity to improve strength, balance and overall health.
- Pennsylvania is an active member of the Falls Free State Coalitions on Fall Prevention Workgroup in collaboration with 41 states and is engaging its many partners in support of the National Fall Prevention Awareness Day.

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