



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE HEAD INJURY ADMINISTRATORS

NASHIA Promotes Falls Prevention Awareness Week

Falls Are the Leading Cause of TBI Among Older Adults

Dear NASHIA Member,

NASHIA joins the National Council on Aging (NCOA), the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Injury Center in celebrating **Falls Prevention Awareness Week September 21-25, 2020**, which aims to raise awareness about how to prevent fall-related injuries among older adults. Click [here](#) to view materials and activities offer by the NCOA. Click [here](#) to find a key contact in your State who is involved in promoting awareness. If your State is inactive, contact fallsfree@ncoa.org to learn more.

Are you aware that provisions pertaining to a fall-related traumatic brain injury (TBI) was included in the Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020? Read further to learn more and steps advocates are taking to secure additional funding for health promotion activities, of which fall-related TBIs is included as a condition under that section.

CO Brain Injury Program Supports Matter of Balance Programs to Prevent Older Adult Falls

MINDSOURCE – Brain Injury Network at the Colorado Department of Human Services has been an essential partner in the development and implementation of Colorado's "A Matter of Balance" programs since the beginning of implementation in July 2009. During State fiscal year (FY) 2019, materials were purchased for classes held in various locations throughout Colorado. The following information is from classes that were conducted that leveraged materials purchased by the TBI Trust Fund during State FY '19.



Did you know?

* Falls are a common cause of a TBI. More than 80% of TBIs in adults over the age of 65 are caused by falls. From 2006– 2010, falls accounted for 40% of all TBIs in the U.S. that resulted in an ED visit,

- 52 classes were provided in various locations throughout the State by 10 different organizations.
- 524 older adults enrolled in MOB classes with an average class size of 10 people.
- 407 older adults completed a MOB class, a 78% completion rate (the national average is 81%).
- 10% of participants reported Hispanic/Latino ethnicity (the national average is 6%).
- The average MOB participant in Colorado is 77 years old, female, and living alone.

For more information contact Liz Gerdeman, Director at liz.gerdeman@state.co.us.



hospitalization, or death.

* In 2014 over 27,000 older adults died from falls and about half of these fatalities were due to TBIs.

* Falls also result in significant direct medical costs and are among the 20 most costly medical conditions (Carroll, Slattum, & Cox, 2005); approximately \$34 billion dollars a year are spent on direct medical costs alone (Stevens, Corso, Finkelstein & Miller, 2006).

* Falls resulting in a TBI not only affect a person's overall health, but also their quality of life. Seniors may restrict their activities because of a fear of falling or as a result of a fall that resulted in a TBI.

To learn more about Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's resources to prevent falls among older adults, click [here](#).

What is the Supporting Older Americans Act?

The Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020 reauthorized the Older Americans Act (OAA), first enacted in 1965, which funds critical services for individuals who are older and individuals with disabilities. These services include nutrition and supportive home and community-based services; disease prevention and health promotion services; elder rights programs; the National Family Caregiver Support Program; and the Native American Caregiver Support Program. The legislation authorizes also funding for the Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) which serve as the single point of entry into the long-term services and supports system, as well as for health education and promotion, and falls-prevention programs.

Is Traumatic Brain Injury Referred to in the Law?

Yes, for the first time, the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act defines a TBI and includes specific provisions addressing TBI in older adults due to falls allowing funding for screening, coordination of treatment, rehabilitation and related services, and referral services. The health promotion section, which authorizes grants to States under approved State plans to provide evidence-based disease prevention and health promotion services, list TBI as one of the conditions with regard to promoting health awareness.

Are There Advocacy Efforts to Support Additional Funding for Health Promotion?

Yes, NASHIA supports the National Council on Aging's efforts to secure at least \$10 million for OAA Title III-D health promotion and disease prevention programs, as provided in H.R. 6800, the Heroes Act, which is the House bill that provides supplemental appropriations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. NASHIA signed on to an [organizational letter](#) to House/Senate Leadership calling for the next coronavirus relief package to include a minimum of \$10 million for the Administration for Community Living (ACL) engagement of the aging services network to implement and sustain evidence-based falls prevention programs and \$4 million for CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control programming and research to prevent older

adult falls. For more information contact publicpolicy@nashia.org.

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