

## *Our Shared Vision*

In Tompkins County, older adults will have fewer falls and fall-related injuries, maximizing their independence and quality of life.

Our community will have expanded opportunities for older adults to maintain their mobility and independence.

**Falls Prevention**<sup>TM</sup>  
STEP UP TO STOP FALLS

Supported by the participating partners and a grant from the Health Foundation of Western and Central New York. The Health Foundation is a non-profit private foundation the mission of which is to improve the health and health care of the people of Western and Central New York.

10/2012

[www/tompkins-co.org/cofa](http://www/tompkins-co.org/cofa)

## Project Summary and Local Resources

**Falls Prevention**<sup>TM</sup>  
STEP UP TO STOP FALLS

Tompkins County Falls Prevention Coalition

Led by the Health Planning Council of the Human Services Coalition

With Partners:

Finger Lakes Independence Center

Lifelong

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

Tompkins County Dept of Emergency Response

Visiting Nurse Service - Ithaca and Tompkins County

**Falls Prevention**<sup>TM</sup>  
STEP UP TO STOP FALLS

## Tompkins County Core Partners

Human Services Coalition



Lisa Holmes



Visiting Nurse Service of Ithaca and Tompkins County



Teri Reinemann



Lifelong

Jillian Pendleton



Beth Harrington

### Other Coalition Members

Beechtree Care Center	Health Department Tompkins County
Better Housing for Tompkins County	Hospicare and Palliative Care Services
Brookdale Senior Living	Ithaca College Gerontology Institute
Cayuga Addiction Recovery Services	Ithaca College Occupational Therapy Dept.
Cayuga Medical Center at Ithaca	Ithaca Housing Authority—Titus Towers
Cayuga Ridge Health & Residential Community	Kendal at Ithaca
Classen Home Health Associates	Must Have Play
Empowerment by Design Home Access	NY Connects
Foodnet	Redmoon Caregivers
Geriatric Care Management Services	Members of the Long Term Care Committee

## Web Sites

**Tompkins County Office for the Aging**

[www.tompkins-co.org/cofa](http://www.tompkins-co.org/cofa)

The COFA site includes:

- Sample balance exercises from *How to Prevent Falls*
- Video Clips from *Exercises to Improve Balance, Mobility, and Strength*
- Home Safety Self Assessment Tool
- Falls Prevention Community Resource Guide
- VNS Training for Home Health Aides
- EMT Training *Aging in Place* which can be used for 11.0 CME Credit for Geriatrics
- Ithaca College Gerontology Institute Training: *Safe at Home and Practical Strategies to Reduce Falls*
- American Geriatrics Society Clinical Practice Guideline: *Prevention of Falls in Older Persons*



Check out the suggestions for fixing hazards in the home including links to:

- Finding a Private Contractor
- Help for Low-Income Households

**Health Foundation of Western and Central New York** [www.hfwcnny.org](http://www.hfwcnny.org)

The **Step Up to Stop Falls** tool kit has a variety of resources for older adults, their caregivers and health care professionals who work with older adults.

Documents include:

- Exercises to improve mobility, strength and balance
- A home safety assessment checklist
- Professional screening and competency guides
- Primary care provider falls prevention tools
- Otago Exercise Programme
- Safety Assessment Falls Education (SAFE)
- Walkability survey
- Community education resources

The following DVDs are available:

- *Exercises to Improve Balance, Mobility, and Strength*
- *Falls Risk Assessment*
- *Curriculum and Resources for an Interdisciplinary Falls Prevention Service Learning Course*

# Tools You Can Use

Call Tompkins County Office  
for the Aging  
**607-274-5482**

## For Professionals

### On COFA site

- Home Health Aide training
- EMS training

### On Foundation site

- OT/PT curriculum
- Assessment tools: screening to comprehensive

## For Community Groups

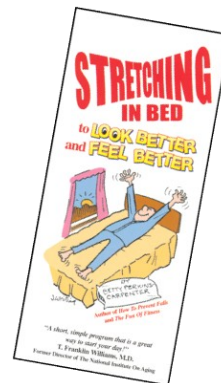
- Materials to distribute
- Bingo Game (Cards are available)
- Tabling Displays
- Talks on falls risks, medication management, home safety assessment, 6 Steps to Better Balance

## For Individuals

- Falls Prevention brochure
- Home safety self-assessment booklet
- Lifelong list of balance/exercise classes
- AMA medication booklet
- FLIC Loan Closet/Try It Room
- Personalized home safety assessment

### While Supplies Last

- Stretching in Bed pamphlet
- Nightlight
- DVD of Tai Chi for older adults



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## *Our Vision*

In Tompkins County, older adults will have fewer falls and fall-related injuries, maximizing their independence and quality of life.

We consider that the risk of falls includes fear of falling and the risk of injury when falling.

What would be helpful for you or your clients??

## Impact of Falls in our Community

Serious falls often result in consequences that severely diminish older adults' capacity to be healthy and independent.

Falls affect individuals and have an impact on the health care system.

- Falls are the top reason the Emergency Medical Services in Tompkins County are called. In 2011 falls resulted in 1,248 out of 9,825 calls (13%).
- Nationally one in three older adults fall each year; if Tompkins County mirrored the trend, this would be an estimated 3,369 people having falls.
- Tompkins County residents aged 60+ years have medical conditions that put them at particular risk of falling. Surveys show that 58% have arthritis, 26% have foot problems and 20% have been diagnosed with osteoporosis.

### Unintentional Fall Injuries—Tompkins County

2008—2010	AGE 65+	
	Emergency Dept. Visits	Hospitalizations
<b>Number Per Year</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>221</b>
Percent Hip Fracture	0.6%	32%
Percent Brain Injury	17%	7.4%
Average Charge	\$1,397	\$14,681
<b>Annual TOTAL COST</b>	<b>\$639,800</b>	<b>\$3.2 Million</b>

The data is from the New York State Department of Health.

The figures are annual averages of data from a three-year period.

The rate of falling increases dramatically with age.

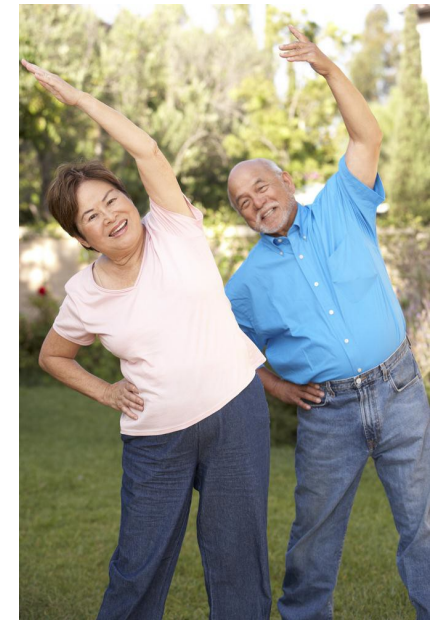
2006—2008		Unintentional Fall Injuries—Tompkins County			
		Emergency Dept. Visits		Hospitalizations	
AGE GROUP	Total in Age Group	Number of People/Year	Rate per 100,000 Residents	Number of People/Year	Rate per 100,000 Residents
0 - 64	91,073	1,163	1,277	71	78.3
65 - 74	5,711	137	2,080	38	801
75 - 84	3,421	226	4,043	86	2,499
85+	1,797	256	9,517	104	6,476

## 2. Do Strength and Balance Exercises.

*You are less likely to fall if your muscles and bones are stronger.*

*Exercises can also improve your coordination and flexibility.*

*If you avoid exercise because you are afraid it will cause you to fall, tell your doctor so he or she can recommend a program for you or refer you to a physical therapist who can devise a custom exercise program for you.*



## 3. Make Your Home Safer

A more detailed checklist is available in COFA's community resource guide.

If you would like a personalized visit to your home to help you identify hazards, a County Office for the Aging staff can help. Call 607-274-5482.

If you need home repairs, they may be able to refer you to programs that could help.

*Things you can do:*

- *Keep floors and stairs clear of clutter.*
- *Make sure stairways have secure railings and are well lit.*
- *Add night lights and keep a clear path from bed to bathroom.*
- *Remove any scatter rugs.*
- *Install grab bars and bath seats in bathroom.*
- *Move frequently-used kitchen and household items to within easy reach.*



# Many Falls are Preventable

Older adults can take steps to:

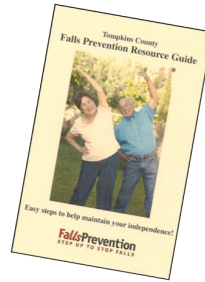
*Increase their ability to remain independent in their own home and*

*Continue the activities that they enjoy.*

Ideas and tips for older adults are in two free publications:

- Falls Prevention brochure
- COFA Falls Prevention Resource Guide

Selections from the Resource Guide are on this and the next page.



## Individual Actions to Reduce Risk

Strategies to reduce the risk of falling include:

- Increased Strength and Balance
- Medication Management
- Home Safety

## Needs Assessment and Plan Development

**Planning ...** Was led by the Long Term Care Committee of the Health Planning Council during the Summer of 2010 through April 2011.

We learned about contributors to the risk of falling and interventions that can help. During the needs assessment we gathered data from both local and State resources, surveyed agencies, held focus groups with older adults and identified existing programs.

### Steps to Prevent Falls

Strategies to reduce risks include:

- Increased Strength and Balance
- Medication Management
- Home Safety



Key plan components are below. The full *Tompkins County Multi-dimensional Falls Prevention Plan* is on [www.hsctc.org](http://www.hsctc.org) or can be obtained by calling the Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County at 607-273-8686.

## Our Goal: To Expand Opportunities for Older Adults to Maintain Their Mobility and Independence

Target Population: Older adults who live in their homes (includes apartments and senior residences).

Our Principles valued a process that is cooperative and collaborative, involving multi-disciplinary and multi-agency participants, with incorporation of best practices and lessons learned from other community-wide programs. We also included components of evaluation, sustainability, quality of life, fiscal responsibility, education/coaching, and involvement of older adults.

While our initial plan focused on older adults, we expected that the benefits of falls prevention interventions and activities would eventually extend into other groups and populations as awareness of the significant benefits of preventing falls becomes incorporated into our community's culture.

**Implementation...** May 2011 through Sept 2012

Projects include those that focus on professionals and those that directly reach individuals. These are on the following pages.

**Sustainability...** Built into each project

## Home Safety Assessment

[www.tompkins-co.org/cofa](http://www.tompkins-co.org/cofa)

The Tompkins County Office for the Aging (COFA) developed a program to offer home safety assessments to older adults living in the community. They started with clients of their Weatherization Referral Assistance and Packaging Program (WRAP).

The WRAP Coordinator conducted the home safety assessments with 20 individuals. An average of 8 - 9 hazards were identified in each home. The leading hazard found was the presence of **scatter or throw rugs**, with lack of **grab bars or sturdy railings** coming in second.

In order to identify how many falls hazards were resolved, follow-up was conducted within six weeks. The goal was that 75% of the people served would resolve at least one home hazard. Each person resolved an average of 4 - 5 hazards.

Every person visited received information on the array of services available for older adults. Of these, nine people (45%), received financial or other assistance to get home modifications such as railings or grab bars installed.



	% of total hazards	# hazards identified	# hazards resolved	% resolved
<b>Presence of throw rugs</b>	15%	42	27	64%
<b>Lack of railings/grab bars</b>	11%	31	8	26%
<b>Cluttered area</b>	10%	28	15	54%

Given this success COFA trained all of their Outreach staff and extended the program to their Personal Emergency Response System Program (PERS) and other clients.

More than 300 falls prevention brochures and nightlights were distributed during outreach visits to WRAP and PERS clients.

### Partnering with Ithaca College Occupational Therapy

FLIC staff worked with professors and 20 graduate students to pilot a 6-week program at Titus Towers utilizing SAFE (Safety Assessment and Falls Education). The students were responsible for coordination of the program, weekly education presentations and group exercises.

They will continue this service learning partnership each fall semester. In 2012 it will be in Newfield and Trumansburg.



### Nutrition Sites

Partnered with Foodnet Meals on Wheels to distribute materials to 500 seniors – thanks to Girls Scouts and Kappa Deltas for assembling packets

Distributed materials at food pantries in Enfield and Lansing – reached 200 recipients.

It helped to go to food pantries early so that people can read information while waiting in line.



### Tools You Can Use

FLIC, as well as other coalition members can provide presentations of varying lengths: 15 minutes, one hour, 3-week series, and 6-week series.

FLIC staff can be reached at 607-272-2433.

**Sustained Changes**

Will continue to give presentations and infuse falls prevention in all FLIC programs.





## Connecting with Older Adults

The Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) worked with partners to reach more than 700 older adults through a variety of ways. These included presentations at senior residential centers, senior nutrition sites, senior community groups and other venues in Tompkins County.

[www.fliconline.org](http://www.fliconline.org)

### Senior Residences

Reached 92 seniors through programs at Titus Towers, McGraw House, Ellis Hollow Apts., Willowbrook Apts., Juniper Manor 1 and 2, Newfield Garden Apts. The program model consists of 6 Steps for Better Balance, strength and balance exercises, and falls prevention education. We tailored activities and presentation to suit the people in the room; residence managers are vital to success.

### Workshops at FLIC

Reached 56 people through workshops on:

- Home Safety Self-Assessment Tool
- Medication Management
- Designing for Change
- Stretching in Bed Exercises

Promotion via HSC listserv extended reach to human service providers



### Community Groups

Gave 15-minute presentation and distributed materials at Trumansburg and St. Catherine of Siena senior luncheons – reached 99 seniors. Scheduled future presentations at a Dryden dinner and GIAC breakfast and will provide a 3-week series co-presented with the FLIC minority outreach coordinator.

## A Success Story

An 82-year-old female homeowner living in the City of Ithaca requested a home safety assessment. The homeowner is also the proud owner of seven indoor cats. During the course of the visit, eleven home hazards were identified, including the presence of throw rugs in several rooms, clutter on the basement stairs, cat bowls and litter boxes in areas which caused tripping hazards, the lack of a railing going into the basement, the lack of grab bars in the bathroom, and the lack of a railing on the outside stairs.



As a result of the home safety assessment, seven of the 11 hazards were resolved. Throw rugs were tacked down to the floor and cat bowls and litter boxes were moved to other areas. The WRAP Coordinator referred the homeowner to Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services, who installed a bathroom grab bar, basement railing and outdoor railing. In addition, the homeowner was referred for a Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) through the Office for the Aging. At the completion of the home safety assessment, the homeowner stated: “The suggestions you made were very good. Why didn’t I think of them? I appreciate your help. I wish my brother had this help in Pennsylvania.”

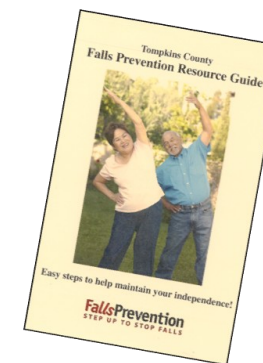
## Tools You Can Use

Download a free copy of the Home Safety Self Assessment Tool or the Falls Prevention Resource Guide from the COFA website [www.tompkins-co.org/cofa/](http://www.tompkins-co.org/cofa/) Or call 607-274-5482.

### Sustained Changes

All COFA Outreach staff are now trained to conduct home safety assessments.

This service will continue as a component of COFA’s Programs.





Visiting Nurse  
Service of  
Ithaca and  
Tompkins  
County

[www.vnsithaca.org](http://www.vnsithaca.org)

Certificates were issued to all attendees so they could receive credit for attendance on their in-service record.

A DVD with all the training materials is available.

### Use by Other Home Care Agencies

The DVD and training materials were distributed to the 10 home care agencies in Tompkins County. Since then four have used it for training or have specific plans to do so. Two others are interested.

## Home Health Aide Training

VNS led the project to develop a two-hour in-service training for Home Health Aides, Personal Care Aides and Consumer-Directed Aides in Tompkins County. They were able to partner with the Finger Lakes Geriatric Education Center which assisted with arrangements, finding a videographer, and completion of a DVD of the in-service.

VNS trained 35 home care personnel from five agencies on 10/19/11. A retired Occupational Therapist presented material on falls prevention in the home and steps aides can take.

### Topics Covered

- Signs and observations to be alert for
- Environmental safety
- Safe transfers
- Use of adaptive equipment
- Medication management
- Recognizing your client's personal risks
- Strategies for encouraging client change
- Steps to take if falls-risk behaviors are evident
- What to report to whom

## 6 Steps to Better Balance®

This program was developed by Dr. Betty Perkins-Carpenter to improve both fitness and balance in older adults. Its six simple, easy-to-learn exercises include "The Slump" and "Dancing With A Pillow."

Lifelong organized a workshop in September 2011 to train people as leaders for this program. We trained 22 people, substantially more than our goal of six.

### Training used in different ways

#### In agency programs

- COFA's Navigator Program
- COFA's Friendly Visitors Program

#### In presentations to older adults

Lifelong partnered with FLIC to provide presentations to more than 90 seniors. For some places the 6-week program was too long; so we also offered both an introductory session and a 3-week series.

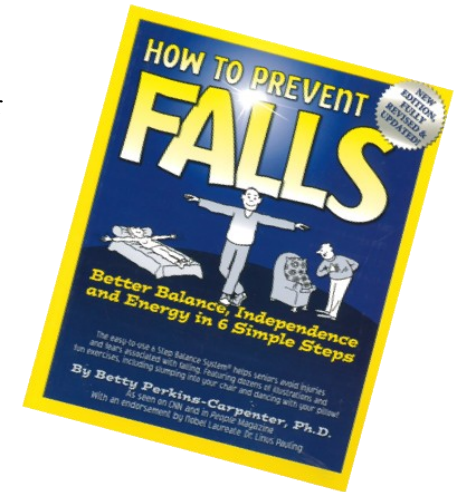
#### In other venues

- Chair strength, balance, stretch classes at Kendal
- Private practice for recovery from hip replacement
- Falls prevention workshops at Foodnet Meals on Wheels

### *Sustained Changes*

Additional classes will continue.

Use of 6 Steps for Better Balance is embedded in many ongoing practices and presentations.



## Tools You Can Use

The schedule of classes and fee structure is on [www.tclifelong.org](http://www.tclifelong.org).

They are in many locations in Tompkins County and are available to adults ages 50 and older.

Check with Lifelong (607-273-1511) to see if you can partner with them to offer a class.







Lifelong

[www.tclifelong.org](http://www.tclifelong.org)

## Strength and Balance

### New ongoing classes

Exceeded our goal of four by establishing seven new classes:

- 3 yoga
- 3 Enhance Fitness®
- 1 Tai Chi class

Classes are in many locations all around the County.



More than 110 seniors participated in one or more of the exercise classes.

*“The instructor gives us pointers on what to do and if we feel that we shouldn't be doing something, she gives us ideas of another way to work the same muscle.”*



### Post-survey of attendees

- People reported that the classes had improved their balance, strength, walking, movements and general well-being.
- No one reported problems with falling after they attended classes.
- The overall feedback was extremely enthusiastic and people hoped that the classes would continue indefinitely.



### From Home Health Aides

*“I knew most of this — but didn't understand the importance of some of it — now I do.”*

*“I plan to remind clients to slow down, and use the 30 second rule when getting out of bed.”*

### **Sustained Changes**

All home health agencies in Tompkins County have the DVD and training package.

VNS will continue to use the DVD for in-service training of new staff and distribute materials to clients.

VNS has contracts with three licensed agencies and has incorporated questions about falls prevention training into their annual review of these agencies.

### Results

The end-of-training post-test showed a 35% increase in the number of aides who intended to ask about falls routinely.

Aides averaged 3 - 4 ideas of changes they could implement to help their clients.

On the one-month post-test, 72% reported using the training to do something for their clients to reduce their risk of falling.

## Tools You Can Use

Download a free copy of the training DVD and materials from [www.tompkins-co.org/cofa](http://www.tompkins-co.org/cofa)



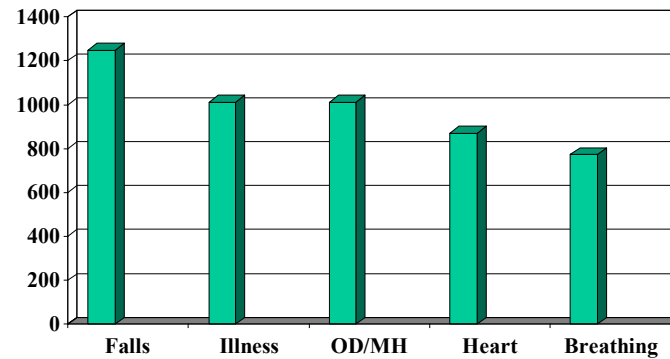


www.tompkinsready.org



## EMS Training and Outreach

### Top Reasons for Calling for EMS in 2011



#### Profile of a “fall victim” in our County:

- ✦ 80-year-old female
- ✦ Living with someone
- ✦ Taking four or more medications
- ✦ Will slip or trip in own living room in late afternoon
- ✦ Will suffer some abrasions and/or pain and will need, or request, transport to the hospital for evaluation



FALLS are consistently the leading reason for calling EMS in Tompkins County (13-14% of all calls).

There are more than 1,200 fall-related calls each year.

### Training Program

The Emergency Response Department developed a training program on geriatrics and the impact of falls. Titled “Aging in Place”, it can be used for 1.0 CME credit towards “Geriatrics”.

This training program is available to all County ambulance services and their personnel.



### EMS Intervention

Focus population: Patients who have called EMS because of a fall, but who, after assessment, do not need or do not want transport to the hospital (about 25% of fall victims)

EMT personnel handed out *Step Up to Stop Falls* brochure and night light. They also referred people to COFA if further information or help was requested.

Bangs, Trumansburg and Slaterville Ambulances participated. At least 75 people were served through this intervention

#### Participated at tabling events

Presented falls prevention information during *Disaster Preparedness and Awareness Month*, Apple Festival in Brooktondale, and other venues.

Reached 350+ people.

#### Sponsored TCAT bus posters on falls prevention



#### *Sustained Changes*

EMS personnel who received training will continue to use what they learned.

Materials will be distributed and referrals to COFA will be made.

Will continue to monitor EMS data and conduct selected special tabulations.

### **Tools You Can Use**

EMS Training package—can be used to meet part of the training requirements for NYS EMS recertification. It is available for free on [www.tompkins-co.org/cofa](http://www.tompkins-co.org/cofa).