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AGING & ADULT SERVICES

News Release

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Falls a Major Risk for Injury, Death Among Seniors

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Every day, an average of eight Utahns aged 65 and older are hospitalized for injuries due to a fall. In 2012, there were 3,183 fall-related hospitalizations among older Utahns, costing more than \$95 million in treatment charges. The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) reminds everyone that injuries from falls are largely preventable.

“Falls are not a normal part of aging,” said Trisha Keller, Program Manager, UDOH Violence and Injury Prevention Program. “Most falls are preventable if we can help older adults learn what hazards to remove from their homes and help them increase their strength and balance.”

Agencies across the Wasatch Front will host free events to help seniors remain active and reduce their risk of falling. Activities include one-mile walks, bingo games, health screenings, fitness demonstrations, and medication reviews. Events will be held at the following Salt Lake County Aging and Adult Services Senior Centers:

- **Monday, Sept. 22** – Walk and health fair from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at the Taylorsville Senior Center (4743 S. Plymouth View Drive, Taylorsville)
- **Monday, Sept. 22** – Walk and super bingo from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Columbus Senior Center (2531 South 400 East, Salt Lake City)
- **Tuesday, Sept. 23** – Walk and health fair from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Millcreek Senior Center (2266 E. Evergreen Avenue, Salt Lake City)
- **Tuesday, Sept. 23** – Walk and lunch from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. at the Liberty Senior Center (251 East 700 South, Salt Lake City)
- **Tuesday, Sept. 23** – Walk and scavenger hunt from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Draper Senior Center (1148 East Pioneer Road, Draper)
- **Friday, Sept. 26** – Walk and health screenings from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the Sandy Senior Center (9310 South 1300 East, Sandy)

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Davis County facilities include:

- **Tuesday, Sept. 23** – Walk from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. at the Autumn Glow Senior Activity Center (81 East Center Street, Kaysville)
- **Tuesday, Sept. 23** – Walk from 11 a.m. to 12 noon at the North Davis Senior Activity Center (42 South State Street, Clearfield)
- **Tuesday, Sept. 23** – Walk from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Golden Years Senior Activity Center (726 South 100 East, Bountiful)

“Our goal is to help our citizens remain independent and healthy,” said Jessica Hardcastle, a health educator at the Davis County Health Department. “Even minor falls can have a dramatic impact on a person’s well-being and sense of safety.”

“Every year an average of 145 Utah seniors die from complications of a fall,” said Nichole Shepard, Salt Lake County Aging and Adult Services. “One fall can be the beginning of a downward health spiral that can include limited mobility, dementia from a head injury, and complications from major surgeries like blood clots and seizures.”

The UDOH recommends four basic steps to reduce the risk of falls:

- **Begin a regular exercise program.** Exercise improves strength and balance, as well as coordination.
- **Have your health care provider review your medicines.** Some medicines or combinations of medicines can make you sleepy or dizzy and cause you to fall.
- **Have your vision checked.** Have your eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year. Poor vision can increase your chances of falling.
- **Make your home safer.** Remove tripping hazards like throw rugs and clutter in walkways and stairs. Install grab bars next to your toilet and shower.

Utah will join 48 other states in recognizing September 23, 2014 as Falls Prevention Awareness Day. For more information about how to prevent older adult falls, visit <http://www.health.utah.gov/vipp/older-adults/falls/>.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.