

A LOOK INSIDE Fall Prevention for Older Adults

Dear Valued Partner,

This month, we're highlighting the value of Fall Risk Prevention. Did you know that EVERY 20 MINUTES an older adult dies from a fall in the United States? And many more are injured by a fall. Injury alone can lead to disability through fractures, activity restriction, and fear. With these high statistics, it's surprising to know that most patients DO NOT tell their provider that they've had a fall.

With Vermont's aging population growing, providers are beginning to build in new procedures to assess for fall risk. Statistics show that 25% of Vermont residents will be older than 65 by the year 2035. This trend will make Vermont the oldest state in the nation in the next 20 years. How do we prevent falls in this vulnerable and growing population?

Who is at risk for falls? Older adults who...

- experience difficulty with balance
- have lower extremity weakness
- use four or more medications
- have visual impairment
- have a gait disorder
- have an acute illness (UTI, pneumonia)

One health center in Vermont, Little Rivers Health Care, has expanded their annual wellness evaluations for their older adult population specifically to assess for future fall risk. We're pleased to share their practices with you!

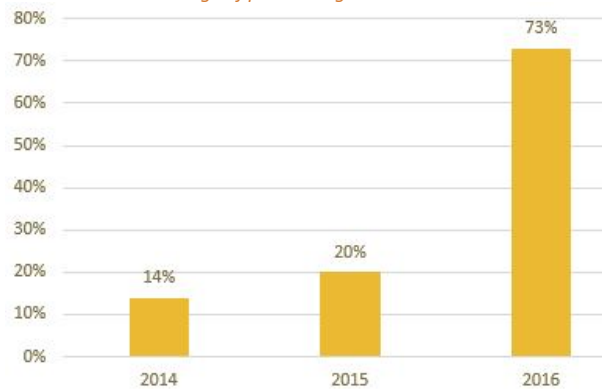
LITTLE RIVERS HEALTH CARE

Little Rivers Health Care (LRHC), a federally qualified health center and a Bi-State member, has taken the reins of this vital care aspect for their elderly population. Maureen Boardman, FNP, is an active contributor to Community Health Accountable Care's (CHAC) Clinical Committee, and has implemented a series of guidelines for LRHC's provider teams to follow. These steps are now part of annual wellness visits for patients age 65 and older:

- Administering the CDC's TUG (Times Up and Go) Test
- Recording test results into newly designated fields in their EHR
- Offering referral options
- Referring patients to the local senior center where Tai Chi and balance classes are offered

Maureen also developed Screening for Future Fall Risk recommendations for the CHAC Clinical Committee in January 2015, which were adopted by the Committee. More recently, she presented two training webinars to the CHAC network to continue to spread the word. LRHC's Fall Risk Compliance has improved by leaps and bounds since implementing the guidelines.

LRHC FALL RISK COMPLIANCE
Percentage of patients age 65+ assessed



Data Source: CHAC Chart Abstraction

Falls-Related Issue	2009	2014
Deaths from Falls	118	137
Hospitalizations from Falls	1,657	2,134
Emergency Department Visits from Falls	5,445	20,293
Total Hospitalization Charges from Falls	\$39,400,000	\$61,519,268

Sources: Vermont Vital Statistics System, 2014; Vermont Uniform Hospital Discharge Date Set, 2014.

RESOURCES

The CDC's STEADI program has numerous resources available on their website, including printable brochures and training videos.



LRHC's MISSION STATEMENT

To provide respectful, comprehensive primary health care for all residents in our region, regardless of their ability to pay.

More information at www.littlerivers.org



Evidence-based guidelines and results were used in developing this content. Some content contributed by Maureen Boardman, FNP, Little Rivers Health Care. Other content sourced from www.cdc.gov/steadi, www.fallsfreevermont.org, and www.vpr.net. Providers should exercise independent medical judgement in meeting the unique needs of each patient. A LOOK INSIDE is a publication of Bi-State Primary Care Association. November 2017

