

September 22, 2016

FLORIDA HEALTH PROMOTES FALLS PREVENTION TO KEEP OLDER ADULTS SAFE AND INDEPENDENT



Contact:

Arlease.Hall@FLHealth.gov

(772) 370-1391

St. Lucie County, FL -The Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie County is promoting the importance of falls prevention among older adults for the 9th annual Falls Prevention Awareness Day celebrated on Sept. 22, 2016, the first day of fall. This year's theme is focused on supporting ready, steady and balanced lifestyles for older adults.

Unintentional falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries among Florida residents ages 65 years and older. In 2014, 2,445 older adults were fatally injured in a fall and there were an additional 50,730 residents hospitalized for non-fatal injuries.

"Public health recognizes that falls among older adults is a notable problem. So, we reached out to our safety net hospital, Lawnwood Regional Medical Center & Heart Institute, to provide local statistics on trauma related falls in St. Lucie. There were 161 trauma related falls from July 31, 2015 to August 31, 2016. We then contacted the Treasure Coast Area Agency on Aging for resource materials to help prevent falls. The following programs are offered: **Tai Chi** and **A Matter of Balance Program**. We ask that you take full advantage of these programs," said St. Lucie County Health Officer Clint Sperber.

According to the National Council on Aging (NCOA), there are several measures that can reduce the risk of falls:

- Exercise regularly. NCOA cites several evidence-based programs that are proven to help older adults reduce their risk, including Tai Ci and the Otago program.
- Consult with a health care professional about a fall risk assessment.
- Have medications reviewed by a doctor or pharmacist.
- Get eyes and ears checked at least annually.
- Ensure the home environment is safe and hazard free.

For more information, please visit the department's Injury Prevention Section [website](#) for **Older Adults Falls Prevention** and www.YourAgingResourceCenter.org for programs on the Treasure Coast.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov

###

