

**University Department of Rural Health, Tasmania**

Falls Prevention Initiative

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## **Stand Up Right – Stay Upright!**

### **Building falls prevention capacity through workforce development**

Tasmania's new Stand Up Right – Stay Upright! project, managed by the University Department of Rural Health, is one of five demonstration projects across Australia to be funded under the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing National Falls Prevention for Older People Initiative.

The two-year project aims to establish best practice in falls and falls injury prevention for community dwelling older people. Particular emphasis is placed on the implementation of evidence-based best practice, and on a collaborative multi-disciplinary approach.

The project is expected to build new and vital partnerships between health providers from acute and community aged care sectors, non-government organisations, general practice, training organisations, professional colleges and associations, and consumer groups across Tasmania.

Stand Up Right – Stay Upright! is a joint project in collaboration with:

- The Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services;
- The Division of General Practice Northern Tasmania (GP North), and
- The University Department of Rural Health, Tasmania (UDRH).

#### **What will the project achieve?**

The long term aim of the Stand Up Right – Stay Upright! project is to reduce the overall incidence of falls and falls related injuries among people aged 65 or more years (55 or more years for Indigenous Australians) who reside in the community by:

- improving early identification of individuals at risk;
- providing better integrated multidisciplinary interventions for older clients with complex care needs, and
- increasing awareness of falls and falls interventions among stakeholders.

#### **Workforce Development Procedure**

The Stand Up Right – Stay Upright! project will be conducted in two specific workforce settings:

- General Practice (GP), and
- Department of Emergency Medicine, Royal Hobart Hospital (DEM).

### **GP Workforce Development**

In northern Tasmania the project will target specific GPs and practice nurses in Launceston and rural areas as identified through GP North.

This component of the initiative will investigate the feasibility of enhancing the coordination of multidisciplinary interventions involving Medicare EPC items, by incorporating a falls prevention focus within the existing suite of EPC items, e.g. health assessments, care plans, case conferences. This approach, if feasible, will be used to improve early identification of individuals at risk and provide better integrated multidisciplinary interventions for clients within the target group.

The initiative will include training in basic falls prevention interventions appropriate for low risk clients, use of a standard Falls Risk Screening Instrument, and investigation of the role of the new Home Medicines Review in the care of high risk clients with complex care needs.

### **DEM RHH Workforce Development**

In southern Tasmania the project will target medical, other health professionals and clerical staff in the Department of Emergency Medicine at the Royal Hobart Hospital and GPs through the Southern Tasmanian Division of General Practice.

This component of the initiative will focus on an appropriate falls screening system that triggers referral by using automatic prompts from Injury Surveillance data held in the Emergency Department Information System, and new guidelines to be developed and implemented in DEM in order to notify GPs of all non-admitted falls clients.

Procedures aimed at identifying high-risk falls clients, who present to DEM but are not admitted, will be implemented to improve the link between the hospital and the primary health care sector. These procedures will enhance partnerships with the clients' GPs and other allied health professionals to provide direction for client management to ongoing falls prevention services.

### **Outcomes**

The project will result in a model to increase support and preventive measures for people before they have a serious fall by making sure that information is passed to the patient and his/her GP, so that everyone can work together. If successful, the model used may be transferable to other health situations.

**For further information about the Stand Up Right - Stay Upright! project contact:**

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