

## Situation:

Falling in the home and community is a significant and under-recognized health issue for older Kentuckians, causing life-threatening injuries each year. Nationally, falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths among older adults. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in three Americans Age 65 and older experiences a fall each year. In Kentucky, it is estimated that one-third of older adults fall each year, resulting in more than 33,000 Kentuckians being treated for fall-related injuries in Kentucky hospitals. According to the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (KIPRC), one in seven older adults hospitalized due to a fall is routinely discharged home from the hospital, compared to two-thirds of patients under 65. Similarly, patients 65 and older are six times more likely than younger patients to be discharged from the hospital into a nursing home for intermediate or long-term care. By 2020, it is predicted that the annual direct and indirect cost of fall injuries is expected to reach \$55 billion dollars. With the population aging, both the number of falls and the costs to treat fall injuries are likely to increase.

“We know elderly people who have osteoporosis or arthritis are more at-risk of severe complications for a fall,” said Department of Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) Commissioner Deborah Anderson. “[But] we want to let our residents know that there are steps that can be taken to reduce these risks.”

Lowering the risk of falling is essential to preserve the safety, health, and independence of older adults. The following steps to prevent falls are simple and can lead to a safer environment and greater self-confidence: exercise to increase strength and improve balance; ask a physician to review medications to reduce the risk of harmful side effects; have a vision check at least once a year; and reduce hazards in the home that can lead to falls.

### ASSUMPTIONS

- A community working collaboratively can create safer environments and increase available and accessible programs and services that are integrated across sectors, therefore reducing falls, and falls-related injuries and death.
- Counties may vary in terms of investment, resources, & buy-in.
- Counties will conduct ongoing data collection.
- Counties will acknowledge and enfold the socioecological model under the premise that everyone in a community has a contribution to make to falls prevention and should be informed/empowered to take action within his/her sphere of influence.

### EXTERNAL FACTORS

- Social: The aging population is growing rapidly.
- Political: Political will for change may not be present.
- Economic: Economic conditions are difficult in many counties and communities; and funding/resources may not be available.
- Technological: Web-based education and Web-based tools can be used to build awareness and facilitate training and dissemination.

## Stand Up To Falling Logic Model

**Situation:** Falling in the home and community is a significant and under-recognized health issue for older Kentuckians, causing life-threatening injuries each year. With the population aging, both the number of falls and the costs to treat fall injuries are likely to increase. It is important to make Kentuckians aware that there are steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of falling, which is essential to preserve the safety, health, and independence of older adults.

