



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

VIRGINIA PRESSLER, M.D
DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 4, 2015

15-026

Hawaii State Department of Health and the Hawaii Fall Prevention Consortium Launch 2015 Senior Fall Prevention Campaign to Reduce Fall-Related Injuries on June 8

HONOLULU – Falls among Hawaii seniors are reaching troubling numbers and are creating an enormous burden on individuals, families and our health care system. Every year in Hawaii, an average 86 seniors die, 1,912 are hospitalized, and 8,010 are treated in emergency departments as a result of falls. This has resulted in almost \$102 million dollars in hospital and physician charges. Falls disproportionately affect the elderly and increase dramatically after age 65.

To address this issue, the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) and the Hawaii Fall Prevention Consortium, in collaboration with FOODLAND Supermarkets, TIMES Supermarkets, KTA Superstores, Kaiser Permanente, WALGREENS Pharmacies, and the Hawaii Community Pharmacy Association, are sponsoring a statewide senior fall prevention awareness campaign from June 8 to August 30. The campaign includes a newly produced educational video about home safety; outreach activities that include free medication reviews and balance testing; and workshops offering fall prevention tips for older adults.

“Almost every hour, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, a senior is transported by ambulance to an emergency room in our state because of a fall injury. Yet many falls and fall-related injuries can be prevented with existing knowledge and technology,” said Dr. Virginia Pressler, Director of the Hawaii State Department of Health. “Fall prevention is a major concern for our state and this collaborative effort is helping to ensure the safety and well-being of our kupuna, the fastest growing segment of our population.”

“By conducting in-store reviews of senior medications, as well as balance tests, our pharmacists from the Hawaii Community Pharmacy Association and the other organizations will be contributing an additional service to support senior health and well-being,” said Catalina Cross, Director of Pharmacy for TIMES Supermarkets.

DOH offers the following important advice to seniors, their family members, and caregivers to prevent falls and fall-related injuries that can limit mobility and independence:

- Have your doctor or pharmacist review your medications yearly;
- Have your eyes checked annually;
- Make your home safer by removing fall hazards and improving lighting; and
- Exercise regularly to increase balance and flexibility.

The Senior Fall Prevention Awareness Campaign includes activities that will unfold in eight major areas:

- **Hawaii State Fall Prevention Conference on October 15, 2015**

The Hawaii State Fall Prevention Conference features keynote speakers Shari Kogan, M.D., an internist specializing in geriatric medicine with The Queens Medical Center, and Debra Rose, Ph.D., professor in the kinesiology department of California State University, Fullerton, Director of the award-winning Center for Successful Aging, and Co-Director of the Fall Prevention School of Excellence. The all-day conference also includes 12 concurrent breakout sessions and interactive workshops as well as exhibits and displays. Go to www.regonline.com/2015FALLPREVENTION for registration. Early bird registration fee is \$90 through July 31.

- **Prevention Tips**

More than 51 stores statewide representing seven major market and pharmacy corporations will distribute 51,000 “bag-stuffers” that contain fall prevention tips for seniors plus information on additional resources from June 15 to August 30.

- **Free Medication Reviews and Balance Testing**

Throughout July and August, nearly 100 in-store pharmacists from sponsoring stores statewide will conduct FREE medication reviews (by appointment only) for seniors to identify medications that could cause or contribute to a fall. In addition, pharmacists will also conduct balance tests for those interested in determining their risk for a fall.

- **Older Americans Month Celebration**

Kaiser Permanente Hawaii is partnering with the Hawaii Fall Prevention Consortium to prevent fall as part of their Older Americans Month celebration in June. In partnership with the Hawaii Fall Prevention Consortium, Kaiser produced a new home safety video designed to reach families of frail seniors to demonstrate how simple it is to make a senior home “fall proof.” The video is slated for use in home visits by social workers and in clinic waiting rooms. Kaiser will continue to offer medication reviews, eye and hearing checkups, and outreach programs to fall-proof homes and encourage seniors to remain active. Additional information and fall prevention support for Kaiser members statewide is available at www.kp.org/healthyaging or call the Kaiser Prevention and Health Education department for a free listing of programs and classes: **Oahu** (808) 432-2260, **Maui** (808) 243-6484, **Hawaii Island** (808) 933-4510.

- **Fall Prevention Video Re-Broadcasts**

Olelo (Public Access Television) will feature “Hana Hou” re-broadcasts of two award-winning educational videos that give a detailed demonstration of what everyone can do to help prevent falls for seniors. Visit Olelo for a listing broadcast times in July and August. In addition, the videos will continue to be shown at senior clubs on Oahu and the neighbor islands and are available to any organization upon request. To request a presentation, e-mail stanley.j.michaels@doh.hawaii.gov

- **Public Service Announcements**

KHON2 and Hawaii News Now will broadcast newly released public service announcements on fall prevention throughout June and July.

- **GPS Fall Prevention Locator**

On July 1, the Hawaii State Department of Health will re-launch its newly upgraded GPS fall prevention locator program on the DOH website at www.nogethurt.hawaii.gov. The program will help individuals locate fall prevention services closest to their community.

- **Seated Tai Chi for Arthritis/Fall Prevention Instructor Workshop**

A new Seated Tai Chi for Arthritis/Fall Prevention instructor workshop will be held at North Hawaii Community Hospital in Waimea on Hawaii Island on June 27 and 28. This new “seated” version allows frail seniors to participate in tai chi without standing as all movements are performed while sitting. This is the fourth and final workshop of this season, with previous workshops held at the Oahu, Plaza at Moanalua, and on Kauai at

“moving on 2 wellness studio.” According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, evidence-based exercise programs such as Tai Chi for Health can increase strength and improve balance, making falls much less likely. For information on the workshop, call (808) 733-9202.

- Stan Michaels from the Hawaii State Department of Health’s EMS and Injury Prevention Program, and several members of the Hawaii Fall Prevention Consortium will be giving presentations to the Waimea Civic Center on Hawaii Island on June 26 and at various senior clubs on Oahu throughout the campaign period. The presentations will feature the new home safety video, the original videos, all the fall prevention tips, plus new information gathered during Michaels’ attendance at the 2015 White House Conference on Aging-Falls Prevention Summit.

For more information about fall prevention for seniors, call (808) 733-9202 or visit

<http://health.hawaii.gov/injuryprevention/home/preventing-falls/information/>

###

MEDIA CONTACT:

Stan Michaels
EMS Injury Prevention
(808) 733-9202