



# Senior Fall Prevention Everybody Falls...!



**Stan Michaels**  
Injury Prevention  
EMS- Dept of Health



**Mary Gadam**  
Public Health Nurse  
Hawaii Department of Health





# Objectives.

- Briefly outline injury prevention concepts.
- Briefly demonstrate both the injury and cost burdens related to Senior Falls.
- Identify Fall Prevention strategies that are proven effective in preventing Home Injuries & Falls and how to use those strategies in your world.
- Outline a process that improves our communication skills with our targets...  
...Families & Seniors in their residence!



# Aging Isn't for Sissy's

- **None of the changes your body goes through from aging are fun.**
- **However...they don't have to stop you from doing what you want to do.**
- **Change is inevitable however you can slow down the negative.**
- **Stay Active - Keep Moving...!**
  - **The buck stops with you...**
  - **No one but YOU...can prevent falls.**





# DATA is the #1 tool we all use - especially in Injury Prevention

- ❖ Who is being injured?
- ❖ How is the person being injured?
- ❖ Where are the injuries taking place?
- ❖ When are the injuries occurring?
- ❖ What about the circumstances under which injuries occur?
- ❖ How severe is the injury problem?
- ❖ **REMEMBER....Everybody FALLs..!**



# The Injury Burden of Senior Falls in Hawaii

- ❖ Falls are the leading cause of fatal injuries for Hawaii seniors.
- ❖ Leading cause for senior Traumatic Brain Injuries.
- ❖ **ALMOST** Every hour, 24 hours a day a senior is transported by ambulance to an ER. That's – over 8,000 every year and it continues to grow.



# The Injury Burden of Senior Falls in Hawaii ( yearly average )

- ❖ 84 Deaths
- ❖ 1970 Hospitalizations
- ❖ 8010 Emergency Room visits
- ❖ Almost Every hour - senior by ambulance to ER.
- ❖ Number and rate of hospitalizations increase with age. 85+ year olds are 10 times more likely to fall than 65-69 year olds.



# The Cost \$ Burden of Senior Falls in Hawaii

- ❖ From 2009 – 2014 Hospital medical charges (ER & Hospital only) for fall related injuries totaled \$520.75 million dollars for the 5 years.
- ❖ The charges peaked in 2009 at \$117.39 million dollars...NOW Average \$102 million. 92.1% were paid by us (Medicare/Medicaid)
- ❖ It is estimated that additional costs associated with rehabilitation and care home expenses could have easily doubled the cost.



# The Cost \$ Burden of Senior Falls in Hawaii continued....

- ❖ Combining emergency room, hospitalization, rehab and care home charges, it can average over \$204 million dollars and is growing.
- ❖ At 92.1% paid for by Medicare or we taxpayers ... It is \$204 million or \$558,904 --- every single day in Hawaii.
- ❖ Incalculable pain and suffering.

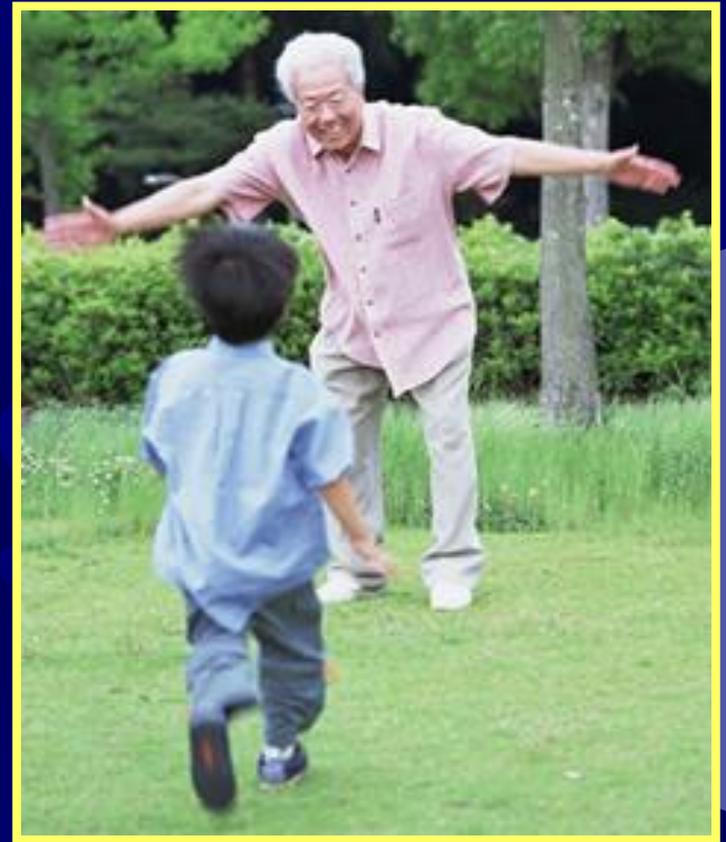
# The “Silver Tsunami” coupled with Hawaii’s unique aging



- ❖ In the US, since January 1st, 2011 every single day more than 10,000 Baby Boomers reach the age of 65.
- ❖ This is going to keep happening every single day for the next 16 years.
- ❖ Hawaii leads the nation in longevity
- ❖ We also lead the nation in the number of grandparents caring for grandchildren

# Our Children's well being Directly Linked to our aging population

- ❖ We lead the nation in the number of grandparents caring for grandchildren.
- ❖ If a grandparent goes down and is incapacitated it can destroy the family.
- ❖ Why? Because the working parent must now stay home and in many instances lose their job or likely will lose the income.
- ❖ We have all heard of someone quitting work to care for an aging, injured, or ill parent.





# Everybody Falls....this message must be shared with your loved ones

- ❖ When a young adult falls or almost falls...they can catch themselves. Or if they fall they can just get up, brush themselves off...and recover.
- ❖ However – because of our maturity we no longer bounce. We hit hard...and our bodies break or bruise and just don't recover.
- ❖ In other words...we don't fall just because we are older. But when we do fall - we get injured much more severely.



# **Everybody Falls..this message must be related/shared with your loved ones**

- ❖ **So realizing that falls happen...we need to take responsibility for ourselves.**
- ❖ **The buck stops right here...!**
- ❖ **Need to stay strong, balanced & healthy.**
- ❖ **Failure to do just that will result in a total loss of your independence.**
- ❖ **And if you are a grandparent...your fall injury could devastate the entire family...because they love you and they depend on you.**



# Home Safety Assessment-Danger!

- ❖ **Soon we will see a video..The Major Tips**
- ❖ **Bathroom – The most dangerous room in the house for Seniors?**
- ❖ **Soap, water + shower, tub = SLIPPERY**
- ❖ **Everything in the room is hard edged?**
- ❖ **If you factor in how much time is spent in the room...falls in the bathroom seem more dangerous.**
- ❖ **Grab bars or safety devices-very effective**



# Home Safety Assessment-Its You

- ❖ Drink enough liquids..must hydrate
- ❖ We know you don't want to have to get up a bunch of times during the night...but don't jeopardize your health.
- ❖ Eat nutritionally. Strength and energy
- ❖ You have to take charge. Don't gamble with your independence!
- ❖ You have control of your future..!
- ❖ If not for you...how about your grandchildren?



# Home Safety Assessment-Outdoors

- ❖ Stay out of trees and off the roof.
- ❖ The last lychee, mango or avocado is not worth a trip to ER-
- ❖ Think Friend or Family...to help hold the ladder.



# Fall Safety-Its Up To You

- ❖ **Communicate with your doctor. Both ways.**
- ❖ **Health is a two-way street...you must tell your doctor the truth. Don't hide the fact that you got dizzy or if you have fallen. Its important.**
- ❖ **If not for you...your loved ones and your grand children**



# Your Health is Precious

- ❖ Practice health and safety in a safe home..!
- ❖ Take responsibility for your own safety.
- ❖ Do not allow yourself or your grandchildren to become statistics.
- ❖ Finally...no more rush- rush..! It is not good for your stress, your heart and mind...AND...
- ❖ ...It is a primary way to get injured. Take your time and savor your maturity. You have earned it..! Take a tai chi class.



# FALL Prevention SUMMARY

- ❖ Have your medications reviewed.
- ❖ Have your eyes checked yearly.
- ❖ Safety check your house...Watch your environment... Careful outside...No ladders..!
- ❖ Exercise, move, get active, slowly is fine..!
- ❖ It is not inevitable that as we mature we will fall...however the odds are good we may...!  
SO...electronic monitoring can save your life!  
If you have fallen or almost..no excuses...!



# Fall Prevention Video Senior to Senior



❖ After the video we have some brochures  
for you about fall prevention.

/

# Fall Prevention Everybody Falls...!

Stan Michaels  
Injury Prevention  
EMSIPSB - Hawaii DOH





# Fall Prevention Contact

- ❖ Hawaii DOH injury prevention web site  
(<http://www.nogethurt-hawaii.gov>)
- ❖ Stan Michaels -  
[stanley.j.michaels@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:stanley.j.michaels@doh.hawaii.gov)