

# Evidence-based Community Falls Prevention Programs: **Saving Lives, Saving Money**

## The Challenge: Older Adult Falls in the U.S.

- **1 in 4 Americans** aged 65+ **falls each year**
- **Every 11 seconds**, an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall
- **Every 19 minutes**, an older adult dies from a fall



**Falls Are Common**



**Falls Are Costly**

- In 2013, the total cost of fall injuries was **\$34 billion** (78% paid by Medicare)
- This total cost may reach **\$67.7 billion** by 2020
- Even **falls without injury can cause fear** of falling, leading to physical decline, depression, and social isolation

Falls in adults aged 65+ are the leading cause of head injuries and broken hips

## The Solution: Proven Community Falls Prevention Programs



**A MATTER OF BALANCE**

8-session workshop to reduce fear of falling and increase activity among older adults in the community

- 97% of participants feel more comfortable talking about their fear of falling
- 99% of participants plan to continue exercising
- \$938 savings in unplanned medical costs per Medicare beneficiary



**OTAGO EXERCISE PROGRAM**

Individual program of muscle strengthening and balance exercises prescribed by a physical therapist for frail older adults living at home (aged 80+)

- 35% reduction in falls rate
- \$429 net benefit per participant\*
- 127% ROI\*\*



**STEPPING ON**

7-week program that offers older adults living in the community proven strategies to reduce falls and increase self-confidence

- 30% reduction in falls rate
- \$134 net benefit per participant
- 64% ROI



**TAI CHI: MOVING FOR BETTER BALANCE**

Balance and gait training program of controlled movements for older adults and people with balance disorders

- 55% reduction in falls rate
- \$530 net benefit per participant
- 509% ROI

### SOURCES:

Carande-Kulis, V., Stevens, J., Florence, C., Beattie, B.L., Arias, I. (2015). A cost-benefit analysis of three older adult falls prevention interventions. *Journal of Safety Research*, 52, 65–70.

Report to Congress in November 2013: The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Evaluation of Community-based Wellness and Prevention Programs under Section 4202 (b) of the Affordable Care Act. <http://innovation.cms.gov/Files/reports/CommunityWellnessRTC.pdf>

\* Net benefit = Direct medical costs averted (e.g., emergency department visits, hospitalizations, rehab, homecare) after subtracting intervention costs

\*\* ROI (return on investment) = Net benefit per participant divided by average cost of the program per participant; percentage of return for each dollar invested

\*\*\*Now known as "Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance"

Learn more about these and other proven programs at [ncoa.org/FallsPrevention](http://ncoa.org/FallsPrevention)