

MEDIA RELEASE

November is falls prevention month *Northerners contribute to development of new falls prevention guidelines*

November 29, 2017 -- November is falls prevention month which means that individuals and organizations across Canada are encouraged to work together to coordinate falls prevention efforts. Approximately one in three older adults over the age of 65 will fall at least once each year. Despite the majority of falls being predictable and preventable, falls are the leading cause of injury deaths, hospitalizations, and permanent disabilities in Canada.

In time for this November, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) released their third updated clinical fall prevention guidelines, entitled *Preventing Falls and Reducing Injuries from Falls*.

Northeastern Ontario had a prominent voice in the development of the document, as three Northerners served on the RNAO's Best Practice Guidelines Expert Panel.

I think it's excellent that we had multiple representatives from the Northeast participating on the expert panel," said Kate Fyfe, Interim CEO of the North East LHIN (NE LHIN). "Our region has a higher proportion of older adults than the rest of the province and our older adults have a higher rate of emergency room visits due to falls. Preventing and treating falls effectively is particularly important to our area."

Wendy Carew is the North East LHIN Regional Coordinator for the Stay On Your Feet (SOYF) Falls Prevention Program. She was also one of the three northerners to serve on the RNAO's expert panel that developed the new fall prevention guidelines.



Patricia Park (left) and Diane Myre (right) act out a skit at a Stay On Your Feet event in Sudbury. Medication management is one of nine steps that can help older adults prevent a fall.

“With November being Falls Prevention Month, all of the SOYF partners have been working to distribute information on how to prevent falls, with a focus this year on medication management,” said Carew “The release of the updated RNAO guidelines is timely, because it will help raise awareness of falls and falls prevention across the province. I’d encourage all those who provide care to older adults to get a copy of the guidelines.”

For the past three years, the NE LHIN has focussed on falls prevention and it continues to be a priority. The regional falls prevention strategy , SOYF), isa partnership between the NE LHIN, the region’s five public health units, primary care teams, long-term care homes, age friendly communities and many other partners. The goals of SOYF are to help older adults in the Northeast stay active, stay independent, and stay on their feet.

Services available through SOYF include free exercise programs for adults 65+ across the region, as well as Stand Up! fall prevention exercises classes. Among many falls prevention resources, of note are two new tools essential for all older adults: a new Home Safety Checklist and the Staying Independent Falls risk self assessment checklist.

The guidelines contain 18 practice recommendations arising from a review of five research questions. Topics covered include how to identify adults at risk of a fall, what medical interventions to undertake immediately following a fall, as well as educational strategies and policy recommendations around preventing falls and related injuries. The updated guidelines replaces the RNAO’s *Prevention of Falls and Fall Injuries in the Older Adult*, published in 2011.

To access the new falls prevention guidelines from RNAO, please visit:
<http://rnao.ca/bpg/guidelines/prevention-falls-and-fall-injuries>

For more information on the NE LHIN’s Stay On Your Feet Falls Prevention Program, please visit: <http://www.nelhin.on.ca/stayonyourfeet.aspx>

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