



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 9/17/2024

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Human Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: Paul Dunaway 707-565-3673, CB Wohl 707-565-5930

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Recommended Action:

Adopt a resolution proclaiming September 23-27, 2024 as Falls Prevention Awareness Week in Sonoma County.

Executive Summary:

Adoption of a Gold Resolution for Falls Prevention Awareness Week recognizes the serious concern of falls for older adults and brings awareness to fall prevention education.

Discussion:

National Falls Prevention Awareness Day is September 22nd and is observed annually on the first day of fall in an effort to promote and increase public awareness about how to prevent and reduce falls among older adults. To recognize the importance of this critical issue, the State of California established the first week of fall as Falls Prevention Awareness Week beginning in 2008. By proclaiming the week of September 23, 2024, as Falls Prevention Awareness Week in Sonoma County, the Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging (AAA) will continue the national and statewide effort of increasing education and awareness about the importance of preventing older adults from falling, coupled with access to programs and services to reduce fall risk.

More than one out of four older adults fall each year, which represents millions of older adults across the country. Unfortunately, less than half of older adults tell their doctor about falling. Falling once doubles an older adult's chances of falling again.

Over 20% of falls cause serious injuries such as broken bones or a head injury, leading to 3 million older adults being treated annually in emergency departments for fall injuries and over 300,000 hospitalizations for hip fractures. Falls are the leading cause of injury-related death among older adults, with the age-adjusted death rate increasing 41% in the decade between 2012 and 2021. Approximately \$50 billion is spent on medical costs related to non-fatal fall injuries and the financial toll for older adult falls is expected to soar as the population ages. Medicare and Medicaid shoulders 75% of these costs. Lifetime medical costs of falling are expected to reach \$101 billion in 2030.

Forty percent of nursing home admissions are due to injuries related to falls with 40% of those admitted to facilities never returning to independent living. Even falls without injury can cause fear of falling, leading to physical decline, depression, and social isolation. Research suggests that older adults underreport falls due to embarrassment, fear, or avoidance, and the word "fall" may carry its own stigma because falling implies weakness and frailty.

Falls are preventable. Increased risk or injury or death and decreased independence can be mitigated by screening for fall risk and intervening to address risk factors such as poor strength and balance, limited physical activity due to the fear of falling, use of medicines that may increase falls, and environmental conditions such as clutter or poor lighting. In response to this need, the AAA provides “A Matter of Balance” in both English and Spanish, which is an evidence-based falls prevention program for older adults to improve their balance, strength and flexibility while also challenging fears of falling and developing assertiveness skills. In addition, the AAA launched its virtual “Fall Prevention and Better Balance” series in 2021 to enable older adults access to this vital information from the convenience of their own home. The AAA also continues its participation in California’s “Dignity at Home Fall Prevention Program” that helps older adults and individuals with disabilities of all ages increase their awareness around fall risks and gain access to fall prevention goods and services, and empowers them to live more fully and without fear.

Prior Board Actions:

Every year since September 2011 the Board has adopted Gold Resolutions for Falls Prevention Awareness Week (with the exception of 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic).

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 24-25 Adopted	FY 25-26 Projected	FY 26-27 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$0	\$0	\$0

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

None

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

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Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

Gold Resolution

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None