



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 9/12/2023

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Human Services

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

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Gold Resolution proclaiming the week of September 18 - 22, 2023 as Falls Prevention Awareness Week in Sonoma County.

Executive Summary:

This 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 22, 2023. This day 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. In 2008, in order to recognize the importance of this critical issue, the State of California established the first week of fall as Falls Prevention Awareness Week. By proclaiming September 18 - 22, 2023 as Falls Prevention Awareness Week in Sonoma County, the Human Services Department's (HSD) Adult and Aging (AA) Division, in partnership with community agencies, continues 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.

Millions of older adults fall. In fact, more than one out of four older adults fall each year, but less than half tell their doctor. 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.

Falling once doubles the chances of falling again. Over 20% of falls cause a serious injury such as broken bones or a head injury. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), research indicates that:

- Three million older adults are treated annually in emergency departments for fall injuries and over 800,000 are hospitalized.
- 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.

40% of nursing home admissions are due to injuries related to falls, and 40% of those admitted never return to independent living. Even falls without injury can cause fear of falling, leading to physical decline, depression, and social isolation.

Fortunately, many falls are preventable through screening for risk and intervening to address risk factors such as poor strength and balance, limited physical activity, use of medicines that increase falls, and environmental conditions such as clutter or poor lighting. In response to this need, the HSD AA Division provides “A Matter of Balance,” 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. Since “A Matter of Balance” classes began in Sonoma County in 2005, approximately 1,880 older adults have participated throughout the county. Over the years, classes have been delivered by a team of over 150 volunteers. The County now offers this program in Spanish. In addition, Sonoma County continues to offer a virtual “Fall Prevention and Better Balance” program to allow older adults access to this vital information from the convenience of their own home.

The AA Division has also been granted additional funding to continue 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, gain access to fall prevention goods and services, and empower them to live more fully and without fear. Since 2020, this program has helped over 215 older adults and individuals with disabilities of all ages.

In addition, senior centers, health and education partners and gyms contribute to fall prevention education efforts throughout the county. To learn more about available falls prevention education options, residents can access the online Aging & Disability Resource Hub directory (www.socoadrh.org) or email mob@schsd.org.

Prior Board Actions:

Board of Supervisors adopted Gold Resolutions for Falls Prevention Awareness Week:

09-13-2022

09-17-2019

09-11-2018

09-19-2017

09-13-2016

09-15-2015

09-16-2014

09-10-2013

09-18-2012

09-20-2011

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 23-24 Adopted	FY 24-25 Projected	FY 25-26 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			

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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)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

Gold Resolution

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

None