



1 August 2008

ANNUAL FALLS FORUM BOOKED OUT IN ADVANCE

The Falls Injury Prevention Collaborative (FIPC) supported by the Queensland Health Patient Safety Centre is conducting their third Annual Falls Forum today, Friday 1st August 2008, at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Education Centre.

Dr Paul Varghese, Director of Geriatric Medicine, Geriatric and Rehabilitation Unit (GARU) Princess Alexandra Hospital and Chairperson of the State-wide Falls Injury Prevention Collaborative said, "The aim of the Annual Falls Forum is to provide an opportunity to hear the experiences of colleagues who have implemented initiatives to address falls injury prevention within their workplace and to keep up to date with the latest research"

"The Forum has been extremely popular this year. There are 267 registrations and we were fully booked a month in advance", Dr Varghese said.

Val French, from Older People Speak Out, officially opened the third Annual Falls Forum. Val said, "Until you actually experience a fall you have no idea how seriously and negatively it can impact upon your quality of life".

"Today's forum is one of the most important approaches health professionals can take to support positive, healthy active ageing", Ms French said.

Associate Professor Maarten Kamp, Executive Director of Queensland Health's Reform and Development Division said, "Every day 46 people are admitted to hospital as a result of a fall. A hip fracture is a serious consequence of falling, and each day 5 older people are admitted with this type of fracture."

"Falls and their consequences are a significant problem for our health system. But more importantly a fall can steal a person's independence and vitality and significantly reduce their quality of life", A/Professor Kamp said.

To help people stay on their feet, A/Professor Kamp officially launched a number of Queensland Stay On Your Feet® Resources. These include:

- Queensland Stay On Your Feet® Community Good Practice Guidelines for those who work with older people
- 'Will I stay active and independent checklist' which highlights key reasons why a person may be at risk of falling.
- How to Stay On Your Feet® checklist, which comprehensively addresses the personal and environmental reasons for people falling and possible solutions.

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In addition to these printed materials, Michael Tilse, Director of the Health Promotion Unit, officially launched the Queensland Stay On Your Feet® website and community good practice toolkit.

Mr Tilse said, “The website and toolkit provides practitioners with a step by step comprehensive guide to preventing falls. The collection of tools, checklists and evidenced based information will assist with setting up a community falls prevention program”.

“The toolkit is a resource that is needed by practitioners and as a result, Queensland Health has been invited to conduct a toolkit workshop at the 3rd Australia and New Zealand National Falls Prevention Conference being held in October at Melbourne”, Mr Tilse said.

To keep up to date with the latest research, the Collaborative invited Cathie Sherrington, Senior Research Fellow, The George Institute for International Health and The University of Sydney to speak about their latest research in prescribing exercise for older people.

Ms Cathie Sherrington said, “From a recent systematic review it is now clear that exercise can prevent falls in community dwelling older people”.

“Exercise is beneficial in preventing falls in the general community as well as for those at increased risk”, Ms Sherrington said.

The forum highlighted 21 presentations from across Queensland. Participants were kept up-to-date on home based exercise, how to set up a falls clinic, Tai chi programs, swapping sloppy slippers and whether or not non-slips socks are non-slip.

To obtain a copy of the Queensland Stay On Your Feet® checklists contact Queensland Health Publications Unit on phone: (07) 3234 1053.

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