



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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**SENIOR FALL PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH
SEPTEMBER 2008**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health's Injury Prevention Program and the Hawai'i Fall Prevention Consortium, in collaboration with Times Supermarkets, Safeway Stores, Costco Pharmacies and KTA Superstores, is sponsoring Senior Fall Prevention Awareness Month during September.

"On average, every five hours in Hawai'i a senior suffers a fall injury so serious he or she must be hospitalized," said Director of Health Chiyome Fukino, M.D. "Fall prevention is a major concern for the safety and well-being of our kupuna, the fastest growing segment of our population."

Senior Fall Prevention Awareness Month activities in September will include "Fall Prevention Tips for Seniors" bag-stuffers distributed statewide by participating stores, newsletter stories and tips, and magnets with fall prevention messages. Beginning September 10, by appointment, in-store pharmacists at participating stores statewide will conduct free medication reviews for seniors to check for medicines that could cause or contribute to a fall. Free physical screening of seniors to assess their risk for falling will be given by the Hawai'i Physical Therapy Association during the Senior Fair Good Life Expo, September 19-21 at the Blaisdell Exhibition Hall.

“We are very excited about the commitment to senior well-being exhibited by our partners Times Supermarkets, KTA Superstores, Safeway Stores and Costco Pharmacies,” stated Deputy Director for Health Resources Morgan Barrett, M.D., M.P.H. “By conducting free in-store reviews of seniors’ medications, pharmacists will be providing a much-needed and valued service.”

Falls and fall-related injuries impact individuals, families, the community at large and Hawai‘i’s health care system. Fall incidents increase dramatically in the years after age 65, and those who have fallen once are much more likely to fall again. Every year in Hawai‘i, on average, 65 seniors die, 1,760 are hospitalized and 4,460 are treated in emergency departments due to falls, resulting in almost \$60 million in hospital and physician charges. Adding the costs of rehabilitation and nursing care can double that amount.

Senior fall prevention tips include exercising regularly to increase balance and flexibility, having a doctor or pharmacist review medications yearly, having eyes checked annually, and making the home safer by removing fall hazards and improving lighting.

For more information about fall prevention for seniors, go to www.nogethurt.hawaii.gov or call 733-9202.

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