



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**News Release**

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GOVERNOR

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**SENIOR FALL PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH  
SEPTEMBER 2009**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health's Injury Prevention Program and the Hawai'i Fall Prevention Consortium, in collaboration with Longs Drugs, The Hawai'i Optometric Association 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: on September 18<sup>th</sup> the Big Island's KTA Puainako store pharmacists will conduct senior medication reviews with the assistance of UH Hilo School of Pharmacy students. Beginning September 22 and continuing through September 27, by appointment only, in-store pharmacists at all Longs Drugs 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 volunteer physical therapists from Straub, Rehab Hospital and FIT Therapy during the Seniors' Fair and Good Life Expo, September 25-27 at the Blaisdell Exhibition Hall.

**(more)**

“We are very excited about the commitment to senior well-being exhibited by our partners Longs Drugs and KTA Superstores pharmacies,” stated Emergency Medical Services & Injury Prevention Branch Chief, Linda Rosen, M.D. “By conducting free in-store reviews of seniors’ medications, pharmacists will be providing a much-needed and valued community service.”

Falls and fall-related injuries impact individuals, families, the community at large, and the state’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, 1,560 are hospitalized, and 4,195 are treated in emergency departments due to falls, resulting in almost \$43 million in hospital and physician charges. Adding the cost of rehabilitation and nursing care can double that amount.

Senior fall prevention tips include participating in tai chi or exercising regularly to increase balance and flexibility, having a doctor or pharmacist review your 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](http://www.nogethurt-hawaii.gov) or call the Department of Health Injury Prevention program at 733-9202.

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