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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Statewide Collaboration Kicks Off NO|FALLS Minnesota Campaign**

*One in four older adults has an injury-producing fall each year*

**Saint Paul, MN** (February 15, 2022) – Falls are a serious threat for older adults and a leading cause of injury. According to the CDC, one in four adults over 65 falls each year. Minnesotans are at particular risk: the state ranks fourth in the country for deaths related to injury from falls. But falls are not inevitable, and they are not a normal part of aging.

Juniper, a network of Minnesota community-based organizations and health care providers, is launching [NO|FALLS Minnesota](https://yourjuniper.org/no-falls/) to prevent falls in older adults. The collaboration includes the Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Board on Aging, Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging, the Minnesota State Fire Marshal, the Minneapolis Fire Department, 16 regional healthcare providers and 70 community-based program providers. These organizations will work together to implement an awareness campaign to keep older adults active, strong and on their feet. The Administration on Community Living is funding the effort through a grant.

Every 11 seconds an older adult is treated in an emergency room for a fall, according to the National Council on Aging. It’s a familiar story for Mary Gray, director of physical medicine at Lakeview Hospital in Stillwater. Last year, their emergency room treated more than 40 patients a month with fall-related injuries.

Gray has seen patients with hip, wrist and rib fractures from falls, as well as concussions and head trauma, and muscle and joint pain. “Many people don’t seek medical care after a fall because they’re afraid of losing their independence.” According to Gray, most falls can be prevented. “Vision, muscles, balance, strength and medications can all contribute to risk and all of those things can be managed.”

Juniper offers free or low-cost evidence-based classes that help older adults prevent falls. [Stepping On](https://yourjuniper.org/programs-classes/prevent-falls/stepping-on/) and [A Matter of Balance](https://yourjuniper.org/programs-classes/prevent-falls/a-matter-of-balance/) are 7 or 8-session classes that help participants understand and minimize their risks, including changes in their physical environment. [Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance](https://yourjuniper.org/programs-classes/prevent-falls/tai-ji-quan-moving-for-better-balance-beginner/) and [Staying Active and Independent for Life (SAIL)](https://yourjuniper.org/programs-classes/prevent-falls/staying-active-and-independent-for-life-sail/) are ongoing exercise classes that help participants strengthen muscles and improve balance. All are small-group classes that provide opportunities for social connection and peer-to-peer support. Juniper offers classes in-person and online and they are available to all Minnesotans.

The collaboration plans to engage about 6,000 older adults in Juniper classes over the next three years, improving the participants’ lives and preventing the often-catastrophic effects of falls. While there is ample evidence for the need for classes, research has found that people don’t respond well to direct messages related to falls. People want to get on the floor and play with their grandchildren, continue to travel and stay independent. The campaign will focus on the positive: build strength, improve balance, feel good and help people take charge of their health and lives.

People can learn more or register for a class at [yourjuniper.org](https://yourjuniper.org/). For help, they can call 855-215-2174 (TTY 711).

**About Trellis**

Trellis ([trellisconnects.org](https://trellisconnects.org/)) is a Minnesota nonprofit that provides services, information and connections and helps people optimize well-being as they age. Trellis provides backbone support for the Juniper network, managing technology, administrative support and marketing. Trellis is the area agency on aging for the Twin Cities metro area and provides other services across Minnesota. The nonprofit is an innovator in aging and works to create products, services and relationships to meet the changing needs of a growing population of older adults. Trellis is committed to serving our aging communities with equity and inclusivity.