

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING AN OLDER ADULT FALLS TASK FORCE TO EVALUATE NEW MEXICO'S CURRENT APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY-BASED FALL PREVENTION AND TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE CHANGE.

WHEREAS, older adult falls are a public health crisis, with one out of three community-based adults sixty-five years and older who fall each year, increasing to fifty percent of all adults over eighty years old; and

WHEREAS, the department of health reports that New Mexico ranks first in the nation for the older adult fall-related death rate; and

WHEREAS, the department of health reports that for adults sixty-five years and older, falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths, hospitalizations and emergency department visits; and

WHEREAS, the department of health reports that, in 2010, for every fall-related death among older adults, there were twelve and one-half hospitalizations and twenty-six and seven-tenths emergency department visits; and

WHEREAS, in New Mexico, among all age groups, adults eighty-five years and older have the highest rate of traumatic brain injury-related death; and

WHEREAS, in New Mexico, falls are the leading cause of traumatic brain injury hospitalization and the second-leading

cause of all traumatic brain injury-related deaths; and

WHEREAS, 2011 New Mexico behavioral risk factor surveillance system data indicate that seventeen and nine-tenths percent of adults, or one hundred twenty-nine thousand adults, who are forty-five years or older had fallen at least once in the previous ninety days, and among those who fell, thirty-six and one-half percent, or forty-seven thousand, sustained an injury that required medical attention; and

WHEREAS, for each of the past three years, the governor of New Mexico has issued a proclamation for a fall prevention awareness day each September; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico adult fall prevention coalition, composed of professionals in private and public sectors of the aging network, in partnership with the department of health and its office of injury prevention, the aging and long-term services department and the New Mexico healthy aging collaborative, seek to advance a comprehensive and statewide effort to reduce the incidence of older adult falls; and

WHEREAS, this partnership strives to advance awareness and access to evidence-based fall prevention programs, including tai chi: moving for better balance; a matter of balance; enhance fitness; and the Otago exercise program; and

WHEREAS, the federal administration for community living, formerly known as the administration on aging, has directed state-area agencies on aging to utilize federal Older

Americans Act of 1965 Title IIID funds for evidence-based community programming; and

WHEREAS, a federal centers for disease control and prevention study indicates that investing in community fall-prevention programs is cost effective and offers a positive return on investment after subtracting the cost of implementing the program; for example, tai chi: moving for better balance returned one dollar sixty cents (\$1.60) per one dollar (\$1.00) invested; and Otago returned seventy cents (\$.70) per one dollar (\$1.00) invested; and

WHEREAS, according to United States census projections, from 2000 to 2025, the population of individuals over eighty years old in New Mexico will almost double, reaching ninety-seven thousand, with half of this group projected to fall without effective intervention; and

WHEREAS, falls are not a normal part of aging, and effective interventions can reduce the risk of falls;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health be requested to convene a task force to evaluate New Mexico's approach to community-based older adult fall prevention and recommend effective change; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the fall prevention task force be requested to examine community-based fall risk awareness, access to interventions and surveillance of older

adult falls; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that under the leadership of the New Mexico older adult fall prevention coalition and its executive committee, the task force be requested to meet quarterly; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the fall prevention task force include representation from the office of the governor, the office of the lieutenant governor, the department of health, designees appointed by the New Mexico legislative council, the aging and long-term services department, the higher education department, the Indian health service, tribal injury prevention programs, the United States department of veterans affairs, health care systems, the emergency medical systems bureau of the department of health, two older adults who have a history of falls and other members of the New Mexico older adult fall prevention coalition; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the fall prevention task force write a comprehensive report and present its findings and recommendations to the interim legislative health and human services committee by November 2013; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report include a section on current approaches to raising fall risk awareness for professionals and consumers, including the number and geography of people reached, a detailed list of expenditures in raising awareness, information distribution practices and

fall risk awareness policy recommendations for effective change, such as a public dissemination forum; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report include a section on current statewide and local public awareness messaging and recommendations with consideration to literacy and cultural appropriateness; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report include a section on currently available community-based fall prevention programming at the state and local level; access and participation in current programming; effectiveness; a local and statewide needs assessment; and recommendations for effective change; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report include a section on the evaluation measures for community-based older adult falls tracked by the department of health and other state agencies, public accessibility to data that may assist in obtaining funds and recommendations for effective change; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force place special emphasis on raising fall risk awareness, increasing access to evidence-based community programming and establishing short- and long-term recommendations to reduce the impact of older adult falls on the people of New Mexico by utilizing cost-effective initiatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the governor, the secretary of aging and long-

term services, the secretary of health, the secretary of human services, the secretary of Indian affairs, the secretary of public safety, the secretary of veterans' services, the New Mexico adult fall prevention coalition and the department of health's office of injury prevention.