

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 32

**51ST LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2013**

INTRODUCED BY

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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

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

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

8           WHEREAS, in New Mexico, falls are the leading cause of  
9 traumatic brain injury hospitalization and the second-leading  
10 cause of all traumatic brain injury-related deaths; and

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

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

21           WHEREAS, the New Mexico adult fall prevention coalition,  
22 composed of professionals in private and public sectors of the  
23 aging network, in partnership with the department of health and  
24 its office of injury prevention, the aging and long-term  
25 services department and the New Mexico healthy aging

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1 collaborative, seek to advance a comprehensive and statewide  
2 effort to reduce the incidence of older adult falls; and

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

7 WHEREAS, the federal administration for community living,  
8 formerly known as the administration on aging, has directed  
9 state-area agencies on aging to utilize federal Older Americans  
10 Act of 1965 Title IIID funds for evidence-based community  
11 programming; and

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

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

25 WHEREAS, falls are not a normal part of aging, and

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1 effective interventions can reduce the risk of falls;

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

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the fall prevention task force  
8 be requested to examine community-based fall risk awareness,  
9 access to interventions and surveillance of older adult falls;  
10 and

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

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

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

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report include a section  
6 on current approaches to raising fall risk awareness for  
7 professionals and consumers, including the number and geography  
8 of people reached, a detailed list of expenditures in raising  
9 awareness, information distribution practices and fall risk  
10 awareness policy recommendations for effective change, such as  
11 a public dissemination forum; and

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

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

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report include a section  
23 on the evaluation measures for community-based older adult  
24 falls tracked by the department of health and other state  
25 agencies, public accessibility to data that may assist in

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1 obtaining funds and recommendations for effective change; and

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

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
9 transmitted to the governor, the secretary of aging and long-  
10 term services, the secretary of health, the secretary of human  
11 services, the secretary of Indian affairs, the secretary of  
12 public safety, the secretary of veterans' services, the New  
13 Mexico adult fall prevention coalition and the department of  
14 health's office of injury prevention.