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## **Commission on Aging News Conference Presents Evidenced-based Data Detailing Connecticut's Commitment to Preventing Falls: "A Critical Strategic Investment"**

During a Sept. 22 press conference at the Legislative Office Building, the Commission on Aging (CoA), in conjunction with the Connecticut Collaboration for Fall Prevention (CCFP) at Yale University, explained how investing in evidenced-based programs reduces the human suffering that results from fall-related injuries among older adults and produces millions of dollars in net savings to the state and federal government.

The news conference coincided with the National Council on Aging's annual "National Falls Prevention Awareness Day."

In addition to CoA Executive Director Julia Evans Starr, participants included Dorothy Baker, Ph.D., RN, a research scientist at Yale University; State Senator Mary Ann Handley (D-4<sup>th</sup>, Manchester); State Rep. Diana Urban (D-43<sup>rd</sup>, North Stonington); Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal; Brian Fillipo, M.D., Vice President, Quality and Patient Safety at the Connecticut Hospital Association; and Carol Bower, of Manchester, whose 87-year-old mother has been the victim of several falls.

In the recently adopted state budget, the General Assembly authorized \$1 million to fund fall prevention programs over the next two fiscal years. Preventing injuries from falls is a key component in the movement to help people age in their homes and communities.

"We estimate that Medicaid in Connecticut currently spends \$119 million a year to provide long-term care services to older adults who have lost the ability to function due to fall-related injuries," Dr. Baker said. (Note: The state's Medicaid budget for long-term care is about \$2 billion.)

Commenting on the fall-prevention awareness program conducted by the CCFP Dr. Baker said, "We decreased the rate of falls by 11% in the greater Hartford region... This reduction translated into savings of \$21 million Medicare dollars in two years and decreased nursing home use since in Connecticut over one-half of those hospitalized for a fall will be discharged into a nursing home." She said the program also saved Connecticut approximately \$6 million in Medicaid expenditures.

Evans Starr noted that programs that prevent older adults from falling help them remain at home and in their own communities rather than being institutionalized after being injured. In its work the CoA's overriding goal, as reflected in its Results-Based Accountability statement, is to ensure that "All present and future older adults in Connecticut live in the secure, healthy and productive environment of their choice."

To review detailed statistics about the severity and cost of fall-related injuries [click here](#).

To learn more about the Connecticut Collaboration for Fall Prevention, [click here](#).