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## **FACT SHEET/Background Fall-related Deaths and Injuries Connecticut Residents**

*Dorothy Baker, Ph.D., RN, Research Scientist, Yale University School of Medicine, in testimony before the General Assembly's Government Administration and Elections Committee March 16, 2009:*

"We estimate that Medicaid in Connecticut spends \$119 million a year to provide long-term care services to older adults who have lost the ability to function as a result of fall-related injuries. And the baby boomers have yet to arrive."

"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."

Facts from the same testimony:

- Each year 30% of the Medicare population living in the community experiences a fall.
- Each year 50% of those aged 80 and over fall.
- Most traumatic brain injuries in Connecticut happen to older adults.
- 20% of 911 calls are due to someone (usually an older adult) falling.
- Falls precipitate 10% of emergency room visits by the Medicare population.
- Falling triples the likelihood of needing long-term nursing home placement.

Note: Connecticut's annual Medicaid budget for long-term care is approximately \$2 billion. This is about 14% of total state expenditures. Of that total, 68 percent is spent on institutional care. (Center on Aging, UCONN Health Center)

*From the Connecticut Department of Public Health:*

"More than any other preventable injury, falls cause older adults to be placed in nursing homes, lead to hospitalization and possibly death. They cost the state millions of dollars."

- Falls are the leading cause of injury-related death for Connecticut residents aged 65 years and older.
- Over 80% of all fall-related deaths occurred among Connecticut residents aged 65 years and older.
- Persons 65 years and older had a fall death rate (31.4/100,000 population) that is approximately 6 times that of Connecticut residents overall (5.3/100,000).
- Falls were responsible for approximately 50% of injury related-hospitalizations among Connecticut residents of all ages.
- 68% of the fall-related hospitalizations are among persons aged 65 and older.
- 28,816 fall-related hospitalizations among Connecticut residents aged 65 and older for the 5-year period 2000-2004.
- Fall-related hospital charges for Connecticut residents aged 65 and older were approximately \$100 million per year for the five-year period 2000 to 2004.
- Medicare covered the costs for two-thirds (67%) of fall hospitalizations.
- Over half (53%) of patients hospitalized for falls were discharged to a skilled nursing facility.
- Falls were responsible for 53% of all injury-related emergency department visits for Connecticut residents aged 65 years and older.
- 85,663 fall-related emergency department visits by Connecticut residents aged 65 and older between 2000 and 2004.

- 85% of fall deaths occurred in the 60- and -older population, and represent the leading cause of injury death in the 70- and -older population; 90% of fatal falls from a bed, wheelchair or other furniture occurred among those individuals 60 years of age and older.
- Unintentional falls were, by far, the leading cause of injury hospitalizations in CT from 2000-2004, accounting for over 3.5 times the number of injury hospitalizations when compared to the second leading cause, motor vehicle traffic crashes.
- Nearly three quarters of all fall hospitalizations occurred in the 60- and -over population, with over one-quarter affecting those 85 years of age and older; falls from slipping, tripping and stumbling reached a rate of more than 1,300 fall hospitalizations per 100,000 among this last group.
- Less than 10% of all fall hospitalizations occurred in the <30 population.
- For the five years, total fall injury hospitalization charges were \$697,155,318 with an average of \$12,075 per stay. In all injury categories fall charges were the highest.
- For the five- year data span (2000-2004) the total fall hospitalization charges for persons aged 65 and older were \$499,170,126.

*Data Sources:*

*Mortality: CT Dept Public Health, Vital Records, 2002-2004*

*Inpatient Hospitalization: CT Office of Health Care Access, 2000-2004*

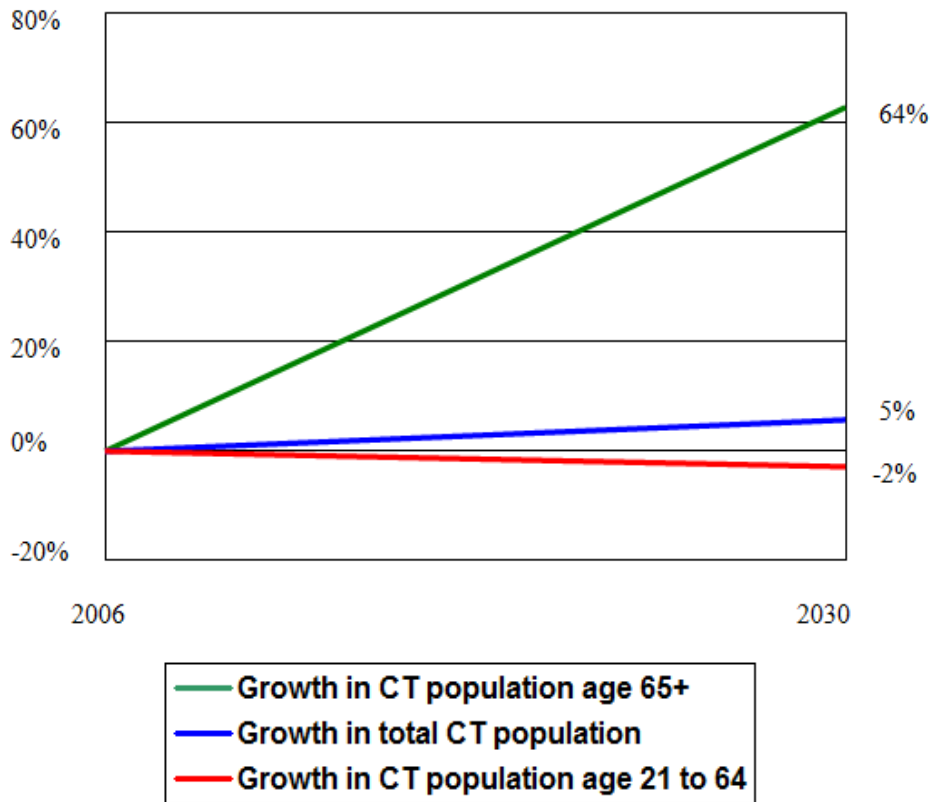
*Emergency Department: CT Hospital Association, 2000-2004*

*CT Department of Public Health*

*Injury Prevention Program*

<http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3137&q=400094>

**Connecticut’s population of people 65+ is projected to grow 64% by 2030.**



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