



### **Falls Free CT Kickoff Meeting**

**Date/Time:** September 16, 2024, 1:00 – 2:00pm

**Location:** Zoom

**Facilitators:** Angela Vázquez, Department of Aging and Disability Services and Robin Tousey-Ayers, Department of Public Health

### **Attendees:**

1. Ashley Morytko, Department of Patient Safety & Quality at UCONN Health
2. Susan Yurasevecz, Connecticut Public Health, Injury and Violence Surveillance Unit
3. Patrick Tourville, Simsbury Fire District and NFPA Public Education Network
4. Carey Clarkson, Nuvance Health Danbury Hospital
5. Jenny Braddock PT, Director of Rehab for McLean
6. Pam Leone RN
7. Christy Ross, PT professor at University of Hartford
8. Britt Lewis, CT Mental Health Agency
9. Lucy Eyre, Duncaster
10. Julie Bruno, Mozaic Senior Life
11. Meg Haffner, Mobility Manager, The Kennedy Collective
12. Nicole Velez, Stamford Health
13. Amanda Hubbard Farmington Valley HD
14. April Chitwood Day Kimball Healthcare
15. Karen Buckley, CHA
16. Carissa Caserta, Naugatuck Valley Health District
17. Chris Johnson, Southington Care Center
18. Deborah Noujaim, UConn Health Center on Aging
19. Carley Taft, NCAAA
20. Odali Rodriguez, Wallingford Health Department
21. Laurie McElwee SC Regional Mobility Manager, The Kennedy Collective
22. Daniela Babcock, CT DPH
23. Nancy Perrotta, HHC Rehab Network
24. Stephanie Johnson, Farmington Valley Health District
25. Jess Gildea, Trauma Program Manager, Hospital of Central Connecticut
26. Robin Tousey-Ayers CT DPH Office of Injury & Violence Prevention
27. Brianna Iorfino, Nuvance Health - Norwalk Hospital
28. Caitlin Stroh, Therapy Program Supervisor with Mozaic Home Care & Hospice
29. Renee King, Day Kimball Health at Home
30. Kevin Connellan, Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine Centers of Plainville
31. Lori Contadino, Executive Director of Greenwich Commission on Aging and the Town's Municipal Agent for the Elderly
32. Steven Katz, Chair of the Commission on Aging for the Town of Greenwich and owner of Sterling Care



33. Olivia Morris, Farmington Valley Health District
34. Kerry Providence, Outpatient Quality UConn Health
35. Eva J. Ng'ongolo, MPH, Quality Johnsons Memorial Hospital.
36. Erin Estey, Program Manager at Bureau of Aging
37. Beth Ricker, LeadingAge Connecticut (for Mag Morelli)
38. Michael D'Elia, Mobility Manager, The Kennedy Collective
39. Catherine Santarsiero, Nursing Director HHC
40. James Powell, Injury Prevention Coordinator at St. Vincent's Medical Center
41. Kelley Tomlinson, Norwalk Health Department
42. Jill Barker, ICU Clinical Manager at Day Kimball Hospital
43. Connie Capacchione - Uncas Health District
44. Michelle Saunders, Inpatient Physical Therapy Gaylord Hospital
45. Lisa Trupp, Naugatuck Valley Health District
46. Teresa Wells, Jerome Home
47. Monica Wheeler, Fairfield University School of Nursing
48. Kim Barre, Trauma Program Manager for the Adult Trauma Program at Yale New Haven Hospital
49. Kathy Creighton, Director Bridgewater Senior Center
50. Suzanne Rodriguez, American Physical Therapy Association - Geriatric Special Interest Group Co-Chair; Co-state Advocate for APTA Geriatrics; Geriatric Residency Director - SHU and Mozaic Senior Life
51. Lori Rygielski, Senior Resources Agency on Aging
52. Laura Wheeler OTR, Assistant Professor at University of Hartford
53. Alexandra (Ali) LaBarca, BHH Director at WCMHN (DMHAS)
54. Amanda Garrity, Dep. Director of Health and Human Services, East Hartford
55. Leigh Ronald - American Physical Therapy Association Geriatrics Co-state Advocate; Faculty - Sacred Heart University Doctor of Physical Therapy Program
56. Amy Emanuel, PHN with Central Connecticut Health District
57. Anne Bernick MA, BSN, RN Wallingford Health Department
58. Robin Crogan Ganley, MSN, RN, TCRN , Trauma Program Manager Stamford Health
59. Jessica Pages, BSN, RN, CEN from Hartford Healthcare Central Region Quality and Safety Department
60. Betty Murphy, CCHD Health Educator
61. Chocolate Ocampo, PT, DPT, GCS from Norwalk CT.
62. Tamires daSilva, Danbury Senior Center
63. Angela Vazquez, Bureau of Aging
64. Tyler Carmen
65. Karen Green, Operations and Network Coordinator for CT Community Care
66. Terri Gillenwater
67. Brian O'Loughlin, BSN, RN, Western Connecticut Home Care

\*81 Attendees were present at one point in meeting. These names were listed within the chat or on camera.



## **I. Opening Remarks: Commissioner Amy Porter, CT Department of Aging and Disability Services**

Commissioner Porter thanked everyone for their participation in Falls Free CT, sharing excitement about the opportunity for collaboration and action through this initiative

## **II. Introduction and Background on Falls Free CT**

Robin Tousey-Ayers, CT Department of Public Health (CT DPH) shared about the history of Falls Free CT, noting that prior to the pandemic, there was an effort to bring together stakeholders around falls prevention. The CT Healthy Living Collective was instrumental to this effort. The pandemic took priority and the effort to coordinate a statewide collaborative effort was paused. The Department of Aging and Disability Services and the Department of Public Health are now working together to renew this effort and launch Falls Free CT.

## **III. Falls Data in CT:**

Susan Yurasevecz, Epidemiologist with CT DPH presented the latest trends in falls data (see full slide deck for more details).

1. Epidemiology 101
2. Older adult falls data – CDC
3. Connecticut Perspective
4. CT: Fatal Falls – CT Vital Records Data
5. CT: Non-Fatal Falls
6. CT: Emergency Medical System
  - A. Lift Assists and NEMISIS 3.5 Reporting System
    1. Using the data as a needs assessment to put together interventions to address the high rate of EMS calls related to falls
    2. Can this data be used or modified to be able to categorize the response needed much more effectively?

If participants have specific data needs, they can submit a request through DPH's website:

<https://portal.ct.gov/dph/health-education-management--surveillance/the-office-of-injury-prevention/falls-prevention-program>

## **IV. Falls Prevention Awareness Week (FPAW)**

Angela Vázquez, Bureau of Aging shared information about Falls Prevention Awareness Week (FPAW), recognized from September 23 – 27 this year. The National Council on Aging (NCOA) has created a FPAW Toolkit that is easy to use: <https://www.ncoa.org/page/falls-prevention-awareness-week-social-media-best-practices-and-toolkit>

Karen Green, Operations and Network Coordinator for CT Community Care, provided an introduction to the CT Health Living Collective and the CT Age Well Collaborative, highlighting the Tai Ji Quan Moving for Better Balance program. Karen discussed how NCOA's FPAW materials were used and updated with organizational logos, the use of Jot Forms, and an app to share with community partners.



## **VI. Coalition Survey:**

Angela presented Falls Free CT's survey, which will be used to collect participant contact information and feedback, as well as interest in working groups and steering committee participation. Falls prevention program and service information will also be collected to help create an updated inventory of available resources. All Falls Free CT participants are asked to complete the brief survey by October 1, 2024: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FallsFreeCT-KickOffSurvey>

## **VII. Discussion:**

To wrap up, Angela and Robin asked the "magic wand" question: If time, money, resources, etc. were unlimited, what would you like to see Falls Free CT accomplish? Responses were collected live and in the chat, and will be used to inform future ideas and direction. Some ideas shared:

- Building stronger partnership that reach further helping our seniors lead a quality life.
- Improving quality of life by improving quality of health – work related issues causing falls, co-morbidities causing falls
- Calls accounts for about 70% of our trauma population - I would like reduce our orthopedic surgeons' work.
- Do a rug buy back.
- I'd love to see seniors connected with community based case managers/social workers to help guide them to available resources
- Proliferation of falls prevention programs like Matter of Balance in senior centers, assisted living and long term care, community centers, anywhere the appropriate demographic congregates. This means training more leaders.
- Home modifications that are specific for the person and home, and affordable
- Share programs on Fall prevention, improving Health Literacy
- Help build grassroots community awareness effort - empower individuals to become "better balance" leaders so they can help disseminate info and share tools and techniques to help people live healthier, more "balanced" lives
- There isn't a lot out in the community for a person recovering from a CVA, spinal cord or prolong hospitalization stay at any age that now is a high risk for a fall
- In home programs for fall prevention - for people not involved with home care. especially on an ongoing basis, once home care is complete.
- State-wide coordinated efforts on Fall Prevention Screening
- Utilize the data provided from DPH to investigate further into communities with high rates of falls and conduct needs assessments
- Train the Trainer programs for community partners to teach and lead Evidenced Based Fall prevention Programs
- Connecting ER/Urgent/PCP medical providers to fall prevention programs in the community for a more seamless process of getting people help for fall prevention
- Fall prevention programs university level student training for PT/OT/nursing, pharmacy, optometry, and audiology programs, etc.



- How do we address frequent fallers who are calling 911 and needing lift assist frequently? (And the subsequent financial requirements due to these falls, and if these people are refusing further medical assistance.)
- Improve effectiveness of data collection for the CT

**VII. Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 10, 11:00am – 12:00pm**