



Falls Free CT Quarterly Meeting

Date/Time: March 10, 2025, 1:00 – 2:10pm

Location: Zoom

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

Attendees: Alexander Duarte, Amanda Garrity, Amanda Hubbard, Amy Emanuel, Andrea Rink, Angela Vazquez, Anne Bernick, Beth Massey, Betty Murphy, Bonnie Meyers, Brianna Iorfino, Caitlin Stroh, Carissa Caserta, Cathy Grosshart, Cesar Silverio, Christy Ross, Daniel Beem, Goesta Schlegel, In-Jee Lee, Jen Bayer, Jennifer DiSette, Jessica Gildea, Julie Womack, Kathy Creighton, Kathy Peterson, Kelly Quinn, Keren Paquette, Kerry Providence, Kevin Borrup, Kevin Connellan, Laura Wheeler, Lauren Muccino, Laurie McElwee, Lillian Swan, Lindsey Loren, Lori Rygielski, Lucy Eyre, Lydia Barakat, Maureen McIntyre, Melissa Marquis, Michael DElia, Nancy Perrotta, Olivia Lespier, Renee King, Robin Crogan-Ganley, Robin Tousey-Ayers, Steven Katz, Susan Yurasevecz, (two attendees called in by phone)

I. Introduction

Robin Tousey-Ayers welcomed everyone to the meeting and Angela Vázquez provided a brief introduction to the purpose of Falls Free CT.

II. Working Group Updates

Angela reminded attendees that the Falls Free CT Working Groups met in January and February. These groups are spaces for developing and implementing smaller projects that help advance falls prevention in each of the Working Group focus areas. Anyone is welcome to join in and participate. Angela and several Working Group members shared updates about what has been discussed and planned to date.

Amy Emanuel shared about the Community-Based Programming and Screenings Working Group. The goal of this group is to implement and enhance community-based falls prevention programs and coordinate falls risk screenings and referrals. Group members have discussed developing standardized educational materials that will be accessible to all coalition participants, creating a guide to evidence-based falls prevention programs, and developing an inventory of trained program leaders.

Susan Yurasevecz shared about the Data Collection & Surveillance Working Group. This group utilizes data to inform fall prevention strategies and measure impact. Group members have discussed statewide and local sources of data on falls and the importance of enhancing data quality. There is currently a project in the works to prepare falls data for each town in CT, which may be used as a baseline to monitor changes in the incidence of falls on a local level.

Robin Crogan-Ganley shared about the Community Awareness & Education Working Group. The goal of this group is to increase public knowledge and awareness about falls risks and falls prevention through educational initiatives and awareness campaigns. Group members have discussed ideas for a falls prevention outreach campaign and forming a falls prevention Speaker's Bureau. The group is also looking forward to planning activities for Falls Prevention Awareness Week in September.



Angela shared for the Workforce Development & Training Working Group. The goal of this group is to equip professionals, students, and caregivers with the knowledge and skills needed to prevent falls among those they serve. The group has noted that there may be some gaps in what is taught to students about falls prevention. There is a desire to gain a better understanding of what is currently included in the curriculum for CT's CNA programs, schools of public health, PT/OT programs, and other similar programs. Lastly, the group also wants to better understand the training needs of coalition participants, so we can explore making more training opportunities available.

Angela also shared for the Home Safety Modifications & Falls Prevention Technology Working Group. This group focuses on enhancing the safety of older adults through home modifications and technology for falls prevention. The group has learned a lot about different technologies that are available, including wearable devices, in-home falls detection systems, geo-fences, virtual reality goggles for balance, and more. Examples of home safety assessments have also been shared. Group members have noted the need for additional support to help older adults gain confidence in using technology and are considering offering an informational session about the latest in falls prevention technology.

Falls Free CT Coalition participants were encouraged to get involved in a Working Group. A list of upcoming Working Group meetings and registration links will be sent out with the email recap for the meeting. The post-meeting survey for coalition participants is another way to contribute feedback for each of the Working Groups.

III. Guest Presentation

The guest presenters for this quarterly meeting were Christy Ross and Laura Wheeler from the University of Hartford. The title of their presentation was, "From Classroom to Community: Engaging PT & OT Students in Service Learning Falls Prevention Screenings." The presenters shared about their work organizing community-based falls prevention screenings and providing experiential learning opportunities for students. Different types of screening tools were also discussed. Please reference the presentation PowerPoint slides for more details.

IV. Post-Meeting Survey and Next Meeting

In the interest of time, Angela quickly shared the link to a quarterly coalition survey. The survey asks for feedback about the meeting, but also asks for input regarding some projects that the Working Groups are planning. Taking five minutes to complete the survey is a great way to contribute to the Working Groups.

The next quarterly coalition meeting is on Tuesday, June 10 at 11:00am.

VI. Final Announcements

Angela shared that the Department of Aging and Disability Services' Bureau of Aging recently applied for funding from the National Council on Aging to support Falls Free CT. NCOA expects to decide by the end of March whether or not to approve the proposal for funding. A brief overview of the proposal was



provided so that coalition participants are informed and aware of the plan, and because some of these activities will still be pursued, even if grant funding is not awarded.

The proposal has three main components. First, Falls Free CT leadership will continue building the infrastructure of the coalition through strategic planning and formalizing coalition membership. There is also the goal of creating spaces for older adults and their caregivers to provide their input into the work of the coalition. To do this, Older Adult Advisory Councils will be formed.

Next, Falls Free CT will develop a falls prevention outreach campaign in consultation with a marketing company. The outreach campaign will involve a toolkit of educational materials and videos that will be available to Falls Free CT participants.

Lastly, the proposal includes more opportunities for individuals to be trained to offer evidence-based falls prevention programs. With the grant funding, leader trainings for A Matter of Balance and Bingocize will be offered. These programs can then be sustained with Title III-D funds, which was reviewed at our last meeting.

The link to the funding opportunity was provided so that coalition participants can review the RFP and understand what is being prioritized and focused on at the national level.

Lastly, Angela provided a follow up on the most recent quarterly meeting, which included a presentation on the National Fire Protection Association's Steps to Safety program and information about a Steps to Safety training on March 19, 2025. There was a positive response to the training opportunity and the training is currently at capacity with 75 registrants. We will report out on the outcomes of the Steps to Safety training at the next quarterly meeting and are hopeful that many new Steps to Safety programs will be developed as a result of this training.