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**The Michigan Fall Prevention Partnership** was formed in 2006 with members from health care, public health, the aging network, academia and professional organizations representing healthcare providers. The Partnership has as its mission **to bring fall prevention efforts into the mainstream of health care efforts and the design of home and community environments to maximize health and independence for older adults.** The Michigan Department of Community Health compiled these facts for distribution on behalf of the Partnership.

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# OLDER ADULT FALLS IN MICHIGAN



*FACTS FOR HEALTH,  
WELLNESS AND AGING  
SERVICES PROVIDERS*

## Falls Cause a Downward Spiral of Health and Activity Decline in Older Adults

Serious Fall → Decreased Mobility →

Reduction in Activities of Daily Living/Fear of Falling →

Decreased Body System Functioning →

Increased Susceptibility to Disease and/or Infections →

Disability → Death

- Between 1990 and 2004, the age-adjusted death rate due to elderly falls **nearly doubled**, from 20.2 to 38.3 per 100,000.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2004, falls caused **79%** of hospitalizations for injury among Michigan residents aged 65 and older. Most of the injuries sustained were fractures, specifically, hip fractures.<sup>2</sup>
- **Twenty-seven percent** of Michigan seniors reported falling within the past 12 months.<sup>3</sup>
- **About one-quarter** of Michigan seniors who fell required medical attention.<sup>4</sup>
- Falls that occurred to Michigan seniors in 2002 had estimated medical costs of **\$657 million and total costs of about \$2.9 billion.**<sup>5</sup>
- Seniors over the age of 75 who fall are **four to five times** more likely to be admitted to a nursing home for a year or longer.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Analysis of data provided by Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) Vital Records and Health Data Development Section.

<sup>2</sup> Analysis of data provided by MDCH Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics.

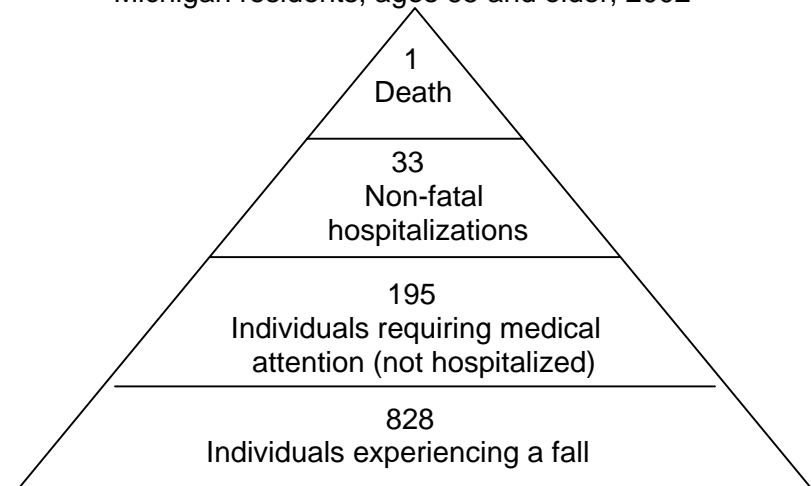
<sup>3</sup> MDCH. *Falls and Fall Injuries Among Michigan's Older Adults*. October 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

- Falls that result in death are just the “tip of the iceberg.” The injury pyramid illustrates the magnitude of fall incidence and serious fall injuries that occur for every fatal fall. For every fall-related death in 2002, there were **33** non-fatal hospitalizations, **195** individuals requiring medical attention and **828** individuals experiencing a fall.

**Injury Pyramid for Fall Injuries**  
Michigan residents, ages 65 and older, 2002<sup>7</sup>



## What Can Providers Do to Help Older Adults Prevent Falls?

A 2003 RAND study found that a multi-factorial falls risk assessment and individually tailored follow-up interventions—especially exercise—are effective in preventing falls.<sup>8</sup> Diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis are effective in preventing fall injuries.

<sup>6</sup> Donald IP, Bulpitt, CJ. *The Prognosis of Falls in Elderly People Living at Home*. Age and Aging. 1999;28:121-5.

<sup>7</sup> MI Resident Inpatient Files, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics, MDCH and 2002-2001 MI Osteoporosis and Arthritis Risk Factor Survey.

<sup>8</sup> RAND. *Fall Prevention Interventions in the Medicare Population*. 2003.