



**DEPT. OF DISABILITIES, AGING & INDEPENDENT LIVING**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

**For Immediate Release: April 30, 2019**

**Media Contacts:**

Ben Truman  
Vermont Department of Health  
802-951-5153 / 802-863-7281

Angela Smith-Dieng  
Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living  
802-241-0309

**Healthy Aging and Falls Prevention Go Hand in Hand**  
*Statehouse event showcases how to avoid fall-related injuries*

BURLINGTON – As Vermont’s population ages, the number of people injured from falls will continue to increase. To help Vermonters maintain their independence and be free from the risk of often serious injury, health and wellness professionals will be on hand this Thursday, May 2 at the Statehouse in Montpelier for Healthy Aging and Falls Prevention Day.

Timed for Older Americans Month, Vermonters can check out Tai Chi demonstrations, get a Stay Steady Assessment from trained physical therapists, and talk one-on-one with experts about the simple actions older Vermonters can take to fall-proof their homes and stay healthy and active. Refreshments will be available.

Joining members of the Falls Free Vermont coalition, Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD, and Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living Commissioner Monica Hutt will be at the event. Members of our congressional delegation or their representatives are also expected to attend.

Vermont’s population is among the oldest in the U.S., with nearly 20% age 65 or older. That figure is projected to increase sharply as the children of the 50’s and 60’s age. According to the Vermont Department of Health, one in three older Vermonters suffer from a fall-related injury each year. Unintentional falls make up the largest portion of the burden of injury in Vermont. Falls are the leading cause of injury-related death overall and are responsible for the largest

number of injury-related hospitalizations and emergency department visits. The average fall-related hospitalization costs approximately \$20,000.

“As we age, falls become a more common hazard and can often result in debilitating injury,” said Dr. Levine. “Many of us know someone who has fallen. The impact of these injuries can be minor, but a serious injury when you are older can result in a loss of independence – which itself can lead to health problems.”

The good news is that falls are preventable and healthy aging is achievable. Prevention activities, such as taking up Tai Chi or similar exercises, help build balance and resilience. Making home modifications to add assistive supports and reduce hazards can help reduce the risk of falls and allow people to continue to stay in their own homes.

### **Healthy Aging and Falls Prevention Day**

Thursday, May 2 (Rain date: May 9)

12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Front lawn of the Vermont Statehouse in Montpelier

**Learn more about falls prevention:** [healthvermont.gov/emergency-preparedness-ems/injury-prevention/prevent-falls](https://healthvermont.gov/emergency-preparedness-ems/injury-prevention/prevent-falls)

**Falls Free Vermont:** [fallsfreevermont.org](https://fallsfreevermont.org)

**For health news, alerts and information,** visit [healthvermont.gov](https://healthvermont.gov)

Join us on [Facebook](#)

Follow us on [Twitter](#)

###