

MEDIA RELEASE

Clinical Excellence Commission

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Urgent action needed with falls a growing threat for ageing population

The Clinical Excellence Commission has today released the Fall Prevention in NSW White Paper 2023 which outlines the significant cost of falls to older Australians and the healthcare sector.

Each year, more than 40,000 older people living in NSW are hospitalised because of a fall at home or in the community. With an ageing population, this could exceed more than 60,000 hospitalisations and \$1.09 billion in healthcare costs by 2041.

The white paper contains nine recommendations and notes the need for both a statewide and national fall prevention strategy to protect older Australians from the serious health impacts of a fall.

Clinical Excellence Commission Chief Executive Prof Michael Nicholl said the white paper aims to build on previous fall prevention work.

“We know there can be debilitating and long-lasting consequences for those who suffer a fall. People who are hospitalised as a result of a fall are twice as likely to need to move into aged care, their recovery can be slow and each year there are around 1,200 deaths of older people in NSW because of a fall,” Prof Nicholl said.

“Research shows falls can be reduced by up to 34 per cent in 12 months, when coordinated and evidence-based initiatives are implemented.

“Our white paper highlights the need for organisations and governments to work together to prevent falls. We need to see broad policy changes, while also encouraging individuals to keep active and healthy and reduce their personal risk.

“Fall prevention requires a whole of community approach to keep our ageing population safe.

“This white paper is designed to stimulate discussion, ideas and initiatives from governments, the private sector, healthcare and stakeholder organisations. We have worked closely with key experts, researchers and consumers to develop the paper and its recommendations.”

The nine recommendations for NSW include:

1. Develop a Falls Action Plan for NSW that outlines a five-year strategy
2. Establish a mechanism to better co-ordinate and link fall prevention actions
3. Deliver fall prevention actions that reflect the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care National Guidelines for Fall Prevention
4. Provide education and training for NSW Health staff and others to deliver and implement evidence-based fall prevention interventions
5. Provide a “one stop shop” for access to resources and program information for consumers and health professionals

6. Collate and track data on the numbers of people being admitted to hospital and presenting to NSW emergency departments after a fall
7. Seek opportunities for collaborative implementation research to deliver effective fall prevention programs in NSW Health settings
8. Advocate and collaborate for national action on falls
9. Collaborate with government departments, agencies and community and aged care organisations.

The full white paper and list of recommendations can be found [here](#).

The white paper is being sent to key agencies and decision makers. The Clinical Excellence Commission will share the paper and its nine recommendations at the Australia and New Zealand Fall Prevention Society and World Congress Joint Conference in Perth from 26 November.

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