

## **FALLS PREVENTION AWARENESS DAY**

### **Media Promotion Tip Sheet**

*These tips will help you plan your media outreach around Falls Prevention Awareness Day. Use them to engage traditional media (newspaper, TV and radio) and promote your efforts on social media.*

#### **Advance Planning**

- **Determine your message.**  
What are you promoting? Are you having an event or promoting your participation in the day?
- **Determine if you need a press release or a media advisory (or both).**  
Templates for both are included in this toolkit.
  - *A press release* targets a broad audience, sometimes via a newswire service that distributes it to a wide network. A release promotes your participation in the day and seeks general attention to the issue.
  - *A media advisory* is sent to a more targeted audience. If you're hosting a special event and want the media to show up, an advisory is the best tool. Highlight any special participants in the advisory.
- **Determine your contacts.**  
Who do you want to tell and what do you want them to do with the information? The answers will guide you to the right contacts. Depending on your plans for Falls Prevention Awareness Day, you may be trying to:
  - Reach the general public to invite them to an event or get them to sign up for a falls prevention class.
  - Reach organizations in the health and nonprofit sector that may want to offer falls prevention programs.
  - Reach policymakers to bring attention to the issue and the availability of effective interventions.

If you're unsure of the best contacts to reach your target audience(s), ask a few people in your target group to list their most trusted sources of information. Your contacts will likely be a mix of traditional media and non-traditional (blogs, social media, community contacts) organizations. If you're trying to decide if a media source targets the desired audience(s), check the readership/viewership data in their media kits, which is often posted on their websites under "advertiser information."

Now, figure out *who* you need to contact at each outlet or organization. Most media sources have reporters with specialized "beats" that target aging, health and wellness, community events, etc. A keyword search on a newspaper's website for example may turn up a reporter who has written several stories about seniors or aging. Often their email address will be listed on the website.

If the event is open to the public, also submit it to community calendars (online, print, TV, radio,

etc).

Beyond mainstream media, these alternative news sources that can be valuable targets:

- Trade media and trade organization newsletters
- Online trade and consumer media sources
- Topical and related blogs (some have very large readership)
- College, university, senior center, or other community newsletters

## Write and Distribute

- **Customize your press release or media advisory.**  
Start with the templates created by the Falls Free® Initiative. Include local quotes if possible.
- **Send out your information.**  
If you're using the media advisory to invite media to a specific event, send it 10-14 days in advance and follow up with a call the day before the event. If you're using the press release to announce participation, 5-10 days prior should be sufficient.
- **Share video testimonials of older adults.**  
You can use these videos from Maine and Wisconsin highlighting seniors who have benefited from falls prevention programs in their community. Or make your own short videos of older adults who have benefited from classes or services. You can send these as links in emails, post them on social media, or add them to your website to promote the day.  
[Maine video](#) | [Wisconsin video](#) | [Missouri flash mob video](#)
- **Identify someone to be the main contact.**  
Media will want quotes from an expert on every story. If reporters request a national perspective, the following experts are available at the National Council on Aging, U.S. Centers for Disease Control National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, and U.S. Administration for Community Living:

Expert: Bonita Lynn Beattie, Lead Falls Free® Initiative  
National Council on Aging  
Vanessa Sink, Public Affairs Manager  
202.600.3131  
[vanessa.sink@ncoa.org](mailto:vanessa.sink@ncoa.org)

Expert: Dr. Judy Stevens  
CDC Injury Center  
Courtney Lenard, Senior Press Officer  
770.488.3733  
[zvq5@cdc.gov](mailto:zvq5@cdc.gov)

Expert: Michele Boutaugh  
Administration for Community Living, HHS  
Ann Mosher, Public Affairs Officer  
202.357.3541  
[ann.mosher@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:ann.mosher@acl.hhs.gov)

## Follow Up

- A few days after you send your release or advisory, follow up by phone.
- To get TV media to attend your event, call the assignment desk and ask if your event is in the day book for the appropriate day. They may tell you to call back closer to the event— 24 hours is a good timeframe for final follow up.
- Some tips for pitching your story:
  - Be brief: Give high-level, short information first. If interested, they will ask for more details.
  - Be relevant: Make the story relevant to the readers.
  - Be emotional: Let them know you care about the issue—then they will too.
  - Repeat, rephrase, and reinforce: Key points are worth repeating!
- If a reporter expresses interest in attending your event, send him or her a reminder email or call 24 hours prior to the event.
- If you sent your release or advisory via a newswire service, search for media pickup within 24 hours and for the next few days. A simple way to search is via Google, using the general search and/or the news button. Complete the same search under Google’s blog listing (found under the “more” tab in the main search bar). You may find that an influential blogger has picked up your story, and you can get engaged in a dialogue that touches those who care most about your issue.
- Engage on social media. Post interesting information and your release/media advisory information on your Facebook page. Join the conversation on Twitter. Tweet your release or invite your followers to your event. Search for people already talking about your topic and engage them. A retweet from a reporter or blogger will get your message out to all of their followers as well.
- Keep trying! Develop relationships with a few key media contacts and keep in touch with them about newsworthy items related to your topic.
- Build your relationship with these reporters by volunteering commentary when there is relevant news in your industry. If you help them out as a quotable source, they are often more receptive to your future story ideas.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media should be planned as part of your other outreach and is a great way to compliment and reinforce your message. Think of social media posts as teases to get people to your website or to an event. The most common social media sites are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn.

### Facebook

Posts can be 420 characters, plus a link, however only about the first 250 characters can be seen in the newsfeed without clicking on the post.

### Twitter

Tweets are limited to 140 characters, including spaces, links, and punctuation.

## LinkedIn

LinkedIn status updates are limited to 700 characters, but only the first 150 will be seen without clicking to view the full post.

## Content

Social media outlets are generally a constant stream of information, so you want your posts to be relevant, but easy to understand and share. Try to think of a way to make them action-oriented by urging your followers to “join us,” or “come out to...” or even “share this information with...”

Studies have found that social media posts that include photos – especially when the photos contain additional information – are shared more often.

Hashtags (terms on Facebook or Twitter that start with the # sign), are a way to search for all of the posts using a certain term. It is also a way for Twitter users to see what the most popular conversations are (what’s trending). This year NCOA is promoting the #FPAD14 hashtag to unify the conversation.

NCOA will be sharing FPAD content on Facebook and Twitter throughout September. Feel free to share these with your followers. Additionally, in the media toolkit on the FPAD webpage, you’ll find sample Twitter and Facebook posts to use to promote your FPAD activities.

### **About the Falls Free® Initiative**

*Led by the National Council on Aging, the Falls Free® Initiative includes 43 state members of the State Coalitions on Fall Prevention Workgroup and more than 70 national organizations, professional associations, and federal agencies working collaboratively to bring education, awareness, and evidence-based solutions to local communities. Falls Free® seeks to provide hundreds of thousands of older Americans with the resources and education needed to reduce their risk of injury. For more information, please visit: [www.ncoa.org/FallsFreeInitiative](http://www.ncoa.org/FallsFreeInitiative).*

### **About NCOA**

*The National Council on Aging is a nonprofit service and advocacy organization headquartered in Washington, DC. NCOA is a national voice for millions of older adults—especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged—and the community organizations that serve them. It brings together nonprofit organizations, businesses, and government to develop creative solutions that improve the lives of all older adults. NCOA works with thousands of organizations across the country to help seniors find jobs and benefits, improve their health, live independently, and remain active in their communities. For more information, please visit: [www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org) | [www.facebook.com/NCOAging](https://www.facebook.com/NCOAging) | [www.twitter.com/NCOAging](https://www.twitter.com/NCOAging)*