

## New Fall Protocols to Reduce Frequency and Related Injuries

KindredHearts Senior Living is excited to announce improvements to our fall reduction program with the objective being to reduce the number of falls and injuries related to falls. After reviewing resident fall information in our Quality Assurance Committee meeting, it was identified that the tendency for residents to experience additional falls in a 48 hour period following an initial fall, upon move-in, when returning from a hospital stay or recovering from an illness significantly increases. We addressed this issue and after a lengthy discussion, the group formed a Falls Workgroup to study the information and develop a response. The Falls Workgroup met over a period of months and came up with the following responses to quickly and proactively respond when a resident falls and to be proactive in reducing identified risks of falling when a resident moves into our community. These new initiatives were implemented across the company in October.

When a resident has a fall or the conditions exist to increase the likelihood of a fall, the care plan is immediately increased to include: ambulation, transfer and toileting assistance, resident checks every 2 hours for 48 hours and removal of any environmental hazards while the fall is investigated. In general, the personal care areas identified are increased for each resident at risk of a fall for 48 hours automatically to increase support for the resident and awareness by the staff. These interventions are designed to be implemented by any staff member at any time. After the investigation surrounding the cause of the fall is complete, permanent preventative tasks are implemented, if necessary.

To learn the key components of the falls reduction program, all resident assistant specialists and residence directors received training in the goals and process of the program. These individuals then trained each resident assistant in each community on the program. We are confident these actions will be effective in reducing the number of falls and related injuries. The Quality Assurance Committee will continue to monitor resident falls to evaluate the improvements we've made in our fall prevention program.

Congratulations to the Falls Workgroup for a job well done. The participants include: Residence Directors Brain Arrowood, Sun Prairie; Amanda Tweedy, Sturgeon Bay; Stephanie Zastrow, Plymouth and Regional Health Care Coordinator Chris Smith, RN.

### **Holiday Gift Policy**

The holiday season gives us reason to revisit our gifts and tips policy. Employees are prohibited from accepting any gifts, monies, items of monetary value, or gratuities of any type from any resident and/or family member. The reason for this policy is because it may be viewed as taking advantage of a resident. Offers should be politely refused and reported to the supervisor. A staff member who accepts a gratuity of any kind is subject to disciplinary action consistent with the policy in the employee handbook.

## Tips and Tricks for Preventing Falls in the Winter

1. Check your footwear. Better traction can help stability on icy surfaces.
2. Keep a shovel and salt handy.
3. Check the railings to be sure that they would be able to support a person who may fall.
4. Always have a cell phone with you in case of a fall or emergency.
5. Slow down and take your time.
6. Ask for help. If you come across an icy sidewalk or parking lot, try to find a set of steady arms to lean on. Most people are happy to help an older person navigate a slippery walkway.
7. Exercise. Stronger leg muscles can really help the likeness of older adults being able to steady themselves if they slip.



Happy Holidays to you and yours this holiday season!



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