

# Falls Among Older Adults in Michigan: A Growing Problem



2011

Falls significantly impact adults 65 and older, their families and Michigan communities. Deaths, injuries, loss of independence and reduced quality of life can result from older adult falls. However, falls are preventable through effective community and healthcare-based programs.

Death rates due to falls among Michigan residents aged 65 and older are increasing dramatically.

The lifetime cost of medical care for hospitalizations and deaths due to older adult falls occurring in 2009 is an estimated \$321 million (this figure does not include the cost of treatment of less serious injuries treated in emergency departments, outpatient settings, and physician's offices).

The percent of Michigan's residents aged 65 and older will increase significantly in the next 20 years.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate that unless effective fall prevention programs are established and supported, the number of older adult fall deaths will increase substantially in upcoming years.

Figure 1: Death Rates Due to Falls, Michigan Residents Aged 65 and Older, 1999-2009

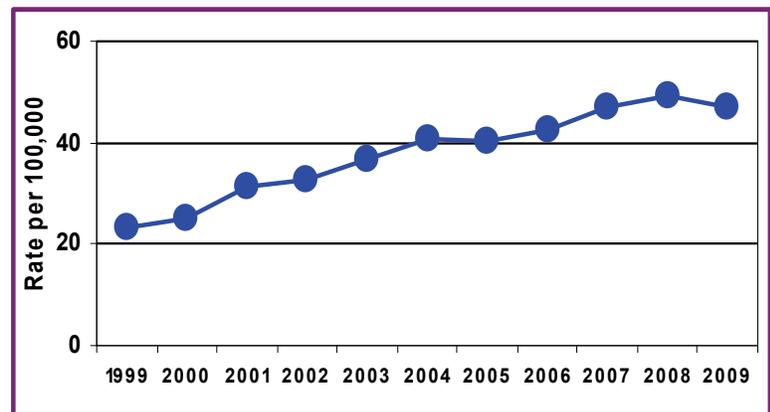
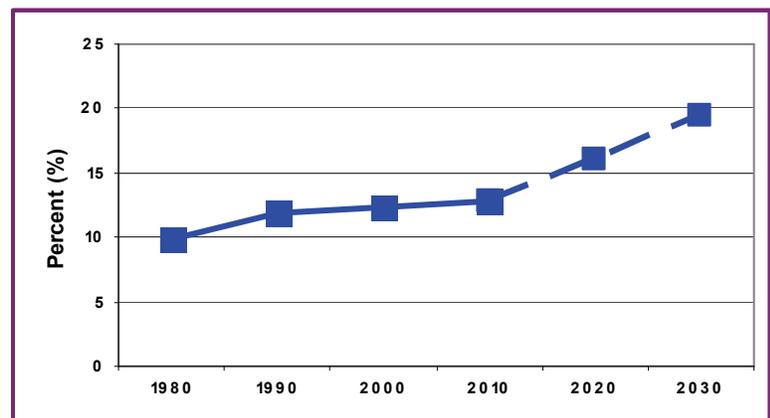


Figure 2: Projected Increase in Percentage of Michigan Adults Aged 65 and older, 1980-2030



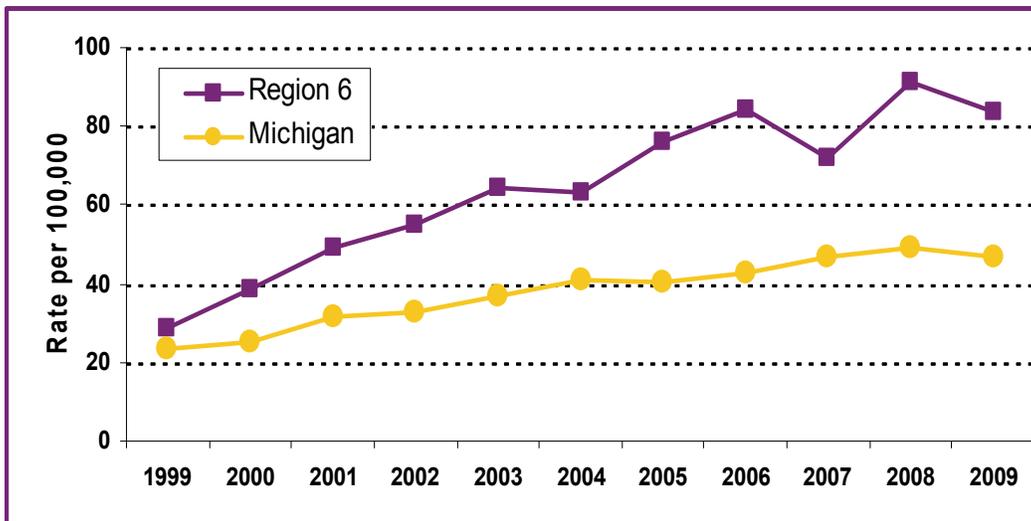
## What can be done to reduce elderly falls?

- In Michigan, "Matter of Balance" community-based programs offered through some Area Agencies on Aging and senior centers, give adults practical strategies to decrease their fears of falling and increase their activity levels.
- Support for policies, programs, resources and environmental change for fall prevention will help reduce falls among Michigan's older adults and will improve their quality of life.
- The U.S. Center for Injury Prevention and Control recommends proven programs, such as:
  - comprehensive clinical assessments and referral to evidence-based programs
  - exercise programs to improve balance and health
  - management of medications
  - correction of vision
  - reduction of home hazards
  - diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis

For information on older adult falls in Emergency Preparedness Region 6, please see reverse.

## Emergency Preparedness Region 6<sup>†</sup> Fatal Fall Rate = 73% Higher than State Rate

### Long-term Trends in Fall Death Rates, Ages 65 and Older Region 6 and Michigan, 1999–2009



The Region 6 fall death rate for older adults tripled between 1999 and 2009

### Comments for recent years (2007-2009)

- The average annual older adult fall death rate for region 6 (82.3 deaths per 100,000) was 1.7 times the state rate (47.7 per 100,000). This was statistically significant.\*
- Annually, an average of 142 Region 6 residents aged 65 and older died due to falls.
- Females comprised 54% of decedents.
- Most incidents (60%) occurred at home, followed by residential institutions (28%).

<sup>†</sup>Counties in Emergency Preparedness Region 6 include Mason, Lake, Osceola, Clare, Oceana, Newaygo, Mecosta, Isabella, Montcalm, Muskegon, Ottawa, Kent, and Ionia.

\*P<.0001 meaning that the probability that the observed difference in older adult fall death rates between the state and Region 6 could have arisen by chance alone, and that this difference does not reflect any true differences in rate between the state and the region, is less than 1 in 10,000.

For more information about falls and older adults, visit <http://www.michigan.gov/injuryprevention> or contact the Injury and Violence Prevention Section at the Michigan Department of Community Health at 517-335-9518.