

Falls prevention strategy

Towards a New Zealand free of injury from falls

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The slip, the trip, the fall. There's more to lose than just your dignity. Between 1993 and 2002 a city the size of Wellington was hospitalised for a fall-related injury. That's over 162 000 people.

Injury of any kind spreads ripples out beyond the injured person to their family, their workplace and potentially their community. An injury affects people's social, psychological and financial wellbeing. Falls, in particular for older people, can be the start of a downward spiral in health.

So, what's being done to reduce the number of fall-related injuries? The 10-year National Falls Prevention Strategy was launched by ACC Minister Ruth Dyson in 2005. The Strategy guides the activities of government, health agencies, service providers, non-government and community organisations towards providing services in a co-ordinated way.

Many individuals and organisations play a part in making the falls prevention strategy real. Several government agencies helped develop the strategy and have a stake in its success; including ACC, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, Sport and Recreation New Zealand, and Land Transport New Zealand.

The individual strategies from District Health Boards (DHBs) and Public Health Organisations (PHOs) were also considered as part of the development of the national strategy.

This means the resources of some of New Zealand's largest government agencies and our frontline health providers are behind this initiative and can provide consistent messages about fall prevention.

Phase one of the strategy sets out its goals and principles. Phase two, starting this year, will involve the de-



livery of the strategy. An implementation plan, currently under development, will have specific fall prevention activities for 2006 to 2010.

ACC is leading the project team working on the implementation plan alongside the falls prevention reference group formed during the strategy's development, and the wider falls prevention sector.

For more information visit www.fallsstrategy.govt.nz