



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Falls Prevention Awareness Day September 22**

Missouri and 47 other states will participate in Falls Prevention Awareness Day on Sept. 22, the first day of fall. Their goal is to show that falls can be prevented and are not a natural part of aging. Falls are the leading cause of fatal injuries for Americans 65 and older.

“Older adults want to stay active, independent, and safe in their homes, but many worry about their risk of falling,” said Catherine Edwards, Executive Director of the Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging (MA4). “In fact, one in three Americans over the age of 65 falls every year. However, every older adult has the power to prevent a fall.”

Across the country, senior centers and older adult organizations will host classes and seminars, perform thousands of fall-risk screenings, and educate older adults about this year’s theme: *Ready, Steady, Balance: Prevent Falls in 2016*. The theme highlights three goals that older adults have the power to achieve:

1. **Be ready:** Education is the most important step in being ready to prevent a fall. Online and at thousands of community organizations, there are resources to help older adults understand their risk of falling. They also can enroll in evidence-based falls-prevention programs to learn how to address their fear of falling and what they can do to sustain their strength.
2. **Be steady:** Older adults can be steady if they take simple steps to prevent falls. These include talking with a doctor about medications, getting hearing and vision checkups, and assessing living spaces for hazards. The National Council on Aging (NCOA) offers an award-winning video that provides [6 Steps to Prevent a Fall](#).
3. **Be balanced:**  
The 9<sup>th</sup> annual Falls Prevention Awareness Day is an opportunity to take a look at the world around us, be aware of falls hazards, and think about how we can make changes that will help our parents, grandparents, aging neighbors, and even ourselves be safe from falls.

For the first time this year, MA4, NCOA and its Falls Free® Coalition encourage supporters to wear a yellow ribbon to increase awareness of falls prevention. For more information, contact Catherine Edwards at [cedwards@ma4web.org](mailto:cedwards@ma4web.org).

### **About The Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging (MA4)**

The Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging (MA4) was founded in 1973 to serve as a statewide advocate and resource for older Missourians. MA4 is comprised of the state's 10 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), which were created under the 1973 amendments to the Older American's Act of 1965. For over 40 years, these local agencies have been providing vital services, programs and information to millions of Missourians and their caregivers, including legal services, home-delivered meals, disease prevention and health promotion, transportation, public benefits counseling, senior center services and activities and in-home services. The 10 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) provide a coordinated network of care in implementing statewide initiatives, which are designed to help older Missourians maintain their independence and give them a voice in articulating their concerns and changing needs.

As the official statewide association of these agencies, MA4 is dedicated to carrying out its mission of service, information and advocacy to improve the lives of older Missourians and to plan for the changes that will take place as the aging population grows in number and importance in the next decade.

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