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A step in the Right Direction ?

NSW management policy to reduce fall injury among older people

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The good news is

- It is not inevitable that you will fall as you get older
- We know why people fall
- With knowledge you can be in control
- Exercise does help - strength, balance & flexibility training: eg Tai Chi



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Factors associated with falls

- Advanced age
- Female
- Living alone
- Inactivity – lack of exercise
- Activity of Daily Living limitations – ability to dress, prepare meals



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Balance and Mobility Factors

- Stability when standing
- Stability when leaning and reaching
- Gait and mobility (walking)
- Ability in standing up
- Ability in moving from chair/bed



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Factors associated with falls

- Poor vision: eg macular degeneration/cataract
- Sight issues: ability to see detail such as signs and the edges and borders or contrast between light and dark: adaptation to the dark
- Reduced peripheral sensation
- Muscular weakness
- Poor reaction time



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Medical factors

- Medications:
 - use of 4 or more
 - use of sedatives and anti-depressants
- Memory problems/confusion
- Depression
- Stroke
- Incontinence
- Acute illness
- Parkinson's Disease
- **Foot Problems**



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Environmental factors

- **Footware**
- Hazards at home - poor lighting, clutter, climbing ladders....
- Hazards in public places - uneven pathways, slippery surfaces, gutters too high.....



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NSW Health Investment

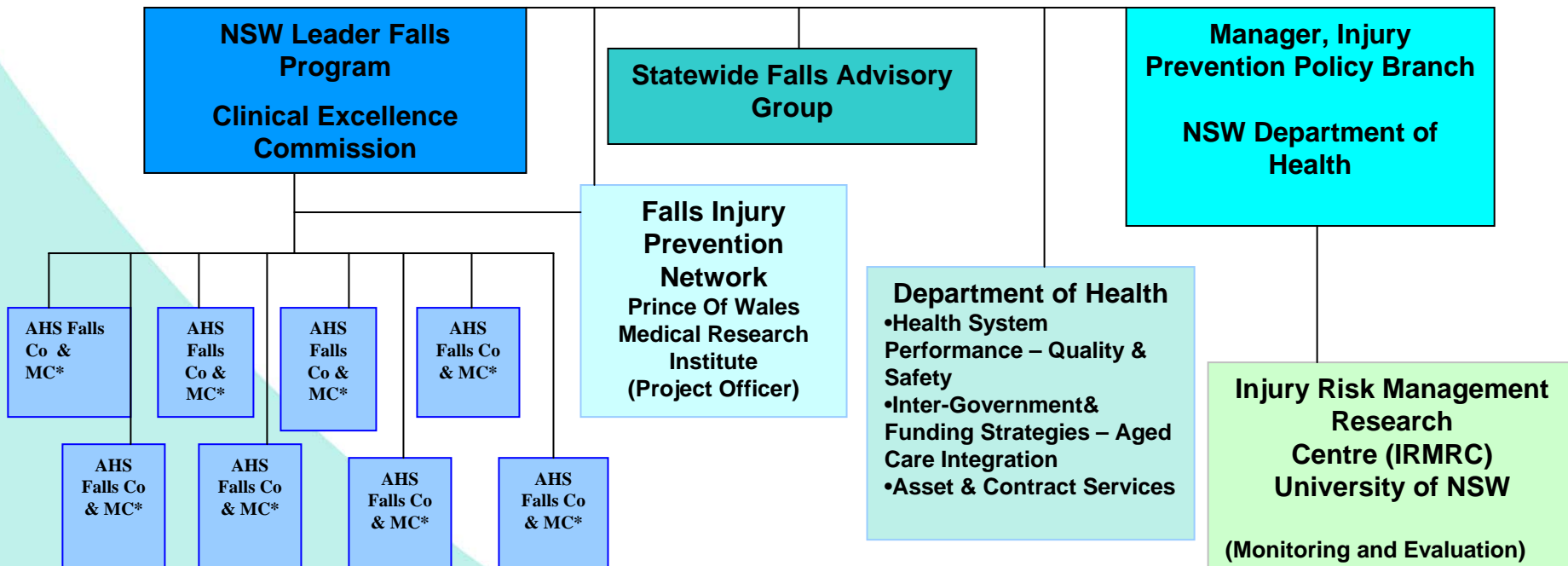
- Policy launch July 04 - \$8.5 million over 4 year with \$2.8M recurrent thereafter
- Area Falls Co-ordinator in each Area Health Service to implement a falls prevention plan

Improve service systems for people at risk of falling



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State-wide implementation





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Potential partnerships

- Older persons community groups
- Organisations (including NGOs) which deliver services to older people
- Local governments
- Aged Care residential care industry members
- Architects, builders and planning industry members
- Fitness industry members
- General Practitioners and health professionals



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Prevention for people at risk

General Practitioner - assessment and advice

- Physical, medication review, vision check
- Vitamin D and Calcium

Targeted and designed exercise programs

- Walking groups, sporting clubs, exercise classes,
Tai Chi, special programs at gyms.....

Information



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Benefits of exercise

- Age is not a barrier
- Can gain strength in legs
- Better balance and co-ordination
- Improves ability to walk, climb stairs, lift and bend
- More confidence and Social activities
- If you don't use it you will loose it



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....RIGHT DIRECTION?

Policy and Guidelines



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NSW Health Policy

Management Policy to Reduce Fall Injury Among Older People

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/public-health/promotion/injury-prevention/types-of-injury/falls.html>

Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

National Falls Prevention for Older People Initiative

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-publth-strateg-injury-falls-projects.htm>

The Australian Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care

- *Preventing falls and harm from falls in older people: Best practice guidelines for Australian hospitals and residential aged care facilities*

<http://www.safetyandquality.org>



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