

The State of Washington



Proclamation

WHEREAS, it is estimated that 17.1 percent of Washingtonians are 65 years of age or older and one fourth of them will suffer falls each year; and

WHEREAS, one-of-five falls causes a serious injury, such as broken bones or a head injury; and

WHEREAS, falls can lead to depression, loss of mobility and loss of functional independence; and

WHEREAS, falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries among this population in Washington state, leading to 1,147 deaths (2023); 19,827 hospitalizations (2023) and 93,417 emergency department visits (2023); and

WHEREAS, falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries among Washington state residents 65 years of age and older, with falls accounting for 66 percent of fatal traumatic brain injuries among older adults; and

WHEREAS, the median hospitalization charges for an unintentional fall among Washington state residents ages 65 and older was \$66,462 (2023); and

WHEREAS, the financial toll for older adult falls is expected to increase as the population ages and may reach \$101 billion nationally by 2030; and

WHEREAS, injuries from falls are largely preventable through evidence-based methods, such as exercise programs to improve balance and strength, medication management, vision improvement, reduction of home hazards, and fall prevention education; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Falls Prevention Coalition is working to increase awareness of this issue, promote multidisciplinary strategies to prevent falls, and encourage people to take steps to protect those who are at increased risk of falling, including the Falls Free Checkup available at www.NCOA.org/tools/falls-free-checkup;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Inslee, governor of the state of Washington, do hereby proclaim September 23-27, 2024, as

Falls Prevention Awareness Week

in Washington, and I urge all people in our state to join me in this special observance.

Signed this 14th day of August, 2024

Handwritten signature of Jay Inslee in blue ink.

Governor Jay Inslee

