

## Block Grant

### Connecticut

#### Older Adults Stand Tall

The Connecticut Department of Public Health's Injury Prevention Program works with local health departments to implement community fall prevention programs for older adults. Local health departments receive annual PHHS Block Grant funds to address community health needs, including fall prevention. Fall prevention activities funded under the Block Grant focus on decreasing home hazards, improving strength and balance through exercise programs, reducing adverse medication interactions, and increasing awareness of fall risks and prevention among older adults and their families.

Local health departments, usually in collaboration with home health care agencies, conduct home safety visits to identify fall hazards, such as slipping and tripping hazards, inadequate lighting, and lack of grab bars or railings. Home visitors provide safety supplies, such as non-slip mats, night lights, tub chairs and rubber cane tips to older adult participants. Home visitors also provide education on how to prevent falls and work with older adults and family members to correct hazards. In addition, fall prevention presentations and medication safety reviews, which check prescription and over-the-counter medicines for possible interactions that could lead to falls, are provided in senior centers, housing complexes and other settings. Exercise classes for older adults, which focus on improving strength, balance and flexibility, are offered in 4- to 6-week sessions at senior centers and housing sites.

Results from the past four years include the following:

- More than 550 home safety visits were conducted for older adults, and at least 77% of identified fall hazards were corrected on visits.
- 50% of the home safety visit recipients reported falling during the year prior to the visit, while only 3% reported falling at the four-month follow-up after the visit.
- At least 370 older adults participated in exercise classes, with 92% reporting at the end of program that they continued to exercise.
- Approximately 900 persons participated in fall prevention seminars or medication safety review programs. Approximately 87% were able to identify fall risk factors and 79% reported taking action to reduce their fall risks as a result of the programs.

**New Mexico**

**PHHS Block Grant Provides Life Support for New Mexico's Rural EMS System**

Because of the vastness of rural New Mexico, a trip to the closest hospital in a medical emergency can take an hour or more. The state's three regional Emergency Medical Services (EMS) offices each cover a geographic area about the size of Kentucky. The only Level 1 trauma center (certified to handle all types of medical emergencies) is in Albuquerque, which is a 4- to 5-hour drive from some parts of the state.

EMS is the only health care service available to all of the state's 1.9 million residents regardless of ability to pay. New Mexico's investment of PHHS Block Grant funding has allowed the state health department to generate significant state, private, and federal funds from other sources to support EMS statewide. The state also has used additional grants and matching funds to buy Advanced Life Support training mannequins, Pediatric Advanced Life Support equipment, and portable cardiac defibrillators. These funds enable New Mexico to provide training and equipment to emergency medical responders so they can respond quickly and competently in an emergency. This support is especially important in rural New Mexico, where nearly 80% of emergency medical responders are volunteers.

In addition, the state's Bureau of Emergency Medical Services receives support from PHHS Block Grant funds to examine, license, and provide regular continuing education to more than 7,000 first responders, emergency medical technicians, and emergency medical dispatchers; inspect, certify, regulate, and support about 400 municipal and county EMS services, 19 air ambulance services, and 70 public dispatch agencies; and support New Mexico's three regional EMS offices.