



**Department for  
the Aging**

Donna M. Corrado, PhD, Commissioner

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media contact:**

**Zenovia Earle**

**(212) 602-4152**

**[zearle@aging.nyc.gov](mailto:zearle@aging.nyc.gov)**

## **DFTA, St. John's, Touro to host medication review to prevent falls**

*And with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and other  
partners, celebrate national Falls Prevention Awareness Day*

**NEW YORK, NY (Sept. 22, 2016)** – The NYC Department for the Aging (DFTA) is partnering with St. John's University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and Touro College of Pharmacy to host medication-review events at senior center this week to mark the ninth annual Falls Prevention Awareness Day.

Many factors can put older adults at risk of falling. Taking four or more medications and taking certain classes of medications increase that risk. According to NYC HANES 2013-14 data, more than half – an estimated 54 percent – of New Yorkers 65 years and older report having taken four or more medications in the past 30 days.

Pharmacy staff and students will hold medication reviews at DFTA-sponsored senior centers across the City on **Friday, Sept. 23**, but events sponsored by falls-prevention partners throughout the City, will continue into October.

Falls are common among older New Yorkers and are a leading cause of hospitalizations. Each year, falls account for the following among New York City residents age 65 and older:

- Nearly 300 deaths
- More than 18,000 hospitalizations
- Nearly 33,000 emergency department visits
- Forty-three percent of falls patients are discharged to skilled nursing facilities

Still, falls themselves shouldn't be considered a "normal" part of aging. Many can be prevented through home-safety modifications, vision checks, and medication review and adjustment.

"Falls prevention is an important part of programming at senior centers across the City," says **DFTA Commissioner Donna Corrado**. "By offering evidence-based exercise classes such as "A Matter of Balance," yoga and tai chi, we ensure that 'olders' remain active and reduce their

falls risk. Senior centers also perform medication checks to ensure that medications aren't contraindicated."

The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) is also at the forefront of falls prevention, monitoring the burden of falls and providing guidelines and information for health care providers, older adults and caregivers.

"Every 15 minutes in New York City, an older adult goes to the hospital because of a fall," said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. "It's important for seniors to eliminate potential hazards at home, be physically active and have regular eye exams to reduce the risk of falls. Health care providers can also play a role by reviewing their patients' medications for any drugs that may cause dizziness. Together, we can prevent falls."

For pharmacy students, the medication-review day is a learning opportunity and a chance to engage with a segment of the population whom they will soon serve as pharmacy professionals.

"The role of a pharmacist is not only to dispense medications, but also to counsel patients on their proper use and warn them of potential side effects that can occur when using certain combinations of drugs. This opportunity is a wonderful educational experience for our pharmacy students that will have a direct impact on patient welfare in a high-risk population," says **Russell DiGate, Dean of St. John's College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences**.

"Many medications, both prescription and over-the-counter, may cause falls, especially when in combination," says **Dr. Henry Cohen, Dean of the Touro College of Pharmacy**. "Falls are especially debilitating in the elderly and can cause head trauma, broken limbs and hip fractures. This program allows us to bring pharmacists and pharmacy students directly to the patients to reduce the risk of falls by switching to safer medications and reducing medication dosages."

Touro and St. John's are members of the New York City Falls Prevention Coalition, which is led by DOHMH and DFTA. The coalition's members include City agencies, hospitals, academic institutions, nonprofits and others whose mission includes advocating for the health and safety of older adults.

###

**Stay Connected:**



