EMS and Falls in Wisconsin, 2022 Report

Falls are a leading cause of injury and death in Wisconsin and in 2022, emergency medical services (EMS) in Wisconsin responded to over 130,000 falls. EMS data offers a unique insight into falls, and EMS offers an opportunity to address falls in the community.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **Wisconsin has the highest fall death rate among older adults in the United States**. Falls do not just cause fatal injuries, but also can cause long-term health conditions stemming from injuries or a loss of confidence in one's own physical fitness.

Despite all of this, falls can be prevented. **There are a variety of steps that people can take to reduce their chance of falling. Some of these include**

- Improving lighting
- Reducing clutter
- Making commonly used items easily accessible

People should consider working with an occupational or physical therapist, their local Aging and Disability Resource Center, or other specialists.

Many people lack access to the community or health care resources needed to prevent falls, or the factors causing their falls are out of their control. Community organizations and volunteers should consider partnering with EMS agencies to better understand falls in their community and to provide interventions.

Key takeaways

- Wisconsin has a high rate of falls among older adults and has the highest fall death rate in the country.
- EMS responses to falls are increasing at an accelerated pace.
- EMS most often responds to falls at home.

Resources

You can find more resources on preventing falls on CDC's Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths & Injuries website, on Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging's website, on the Stepping On program's website, and in the Partnering with Fire and Emergency Medical Services to Prevent Falls article from National Council on Aging.

Data in this report are from both the Wisconsin Ambulance Run Data System (WARDS) as well as the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS).