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### Refer to Home Health for:

- Skilled Nursing
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- Post Surgical Care
- Wound Care
- Ostomy Care
- Rehabilitation Therapies (Physical, Occupational, Speech)
- Disease Management
  - Heart Failure Program with Telemonitoring
  - Diabetes
  - COPD
- Medication Management
- Tube feedings or TPN
- Pain Management
- Home Safety Evaluations

### Or refer for specialty programs:

- Palliative Care for pain and symptom management
- Hospice Care for those facing end of life

We accept Medicare, Medicaid, and most major insurances.

### Feedback

If you have any comments on this issue or to be taken off our mail list, please email: [ann.johnson@baystatehealth.org](mailto:ann.johnson@baystatehealth.org)

## A Prescription to Prevent Fall Injuries

Every year, one third of community-dwelling seniors experience an accidental fall.<sup>1</sup> Treatment for fall injuries suffered by senior citizens makes up 11% of all emergency department visits (2.1 million visits per year).<sup>2</sup> Inasmuch as this situation represents a significant risk to seniors and many of these falls are preventable, proactive measures to protect seniors from fall injuries should be considered. Research has demonstrated that a multi-disciplinary fall prevention program under the general supervision of a physician can significantly modify the risk of fall injuries.<sup>3-7</sup> When patients are homebound, prescribe a comprehensive, home-based, fall prevention program from Baystate Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice (BVNAH). Our home health services can both prevent falls and lessen the severity of injuries when falls do occur.

### Indications for a fall prevention program:

- A recent fall or history of falls
- Functional limitations – such as altered gait; low foot clearance; “Timed Up and Go Test “(15 seconds or more)
- Poly Pharmacy
- Visual/Cognitive Impairment
- Environmental Hazards
- Three or more diagnoses

### A fall prevention program from BVNAH can include:

- The combined expertise of physical therapists, occupational therapists, and home health nurses
- Home safety/environmental assessment & modifications
- Gait training
- Balance training / proprioceptive rehabilitation
- Transfer training
- Strengthening (lower & upper extremities)
- ROM (lower & upper extremities)
- Training with ambulation devices
- Optimization of activities of daily living
- Customized home exercise plan
- Medication review (including medicine cabinet and pantry review)



The majority of fall injuries occur at home, so a home-based fall prevention program may prove the optimal intervention strategy. One study including 360 community-dwelling, frail seniors found that **home assessments alone reduced the incidence of falls by 37%.**<sup>3</sup> Future falls were most likely to be reduced among seniors who experienced a recent fall. Researchers theorize that the recent fall made seniors more motivated to implement continuously at least one suggestion from the home assessment. It has also been demonstrated that a home-based exercise program can reduce fall-related injuries by 35%.<sup>4</sup>

**With one third of seniors experiencing an accidental fall each year, doctors should expect that a significant percentage of their patients would qualify for fall prevention efforts.** On average, Medicare’s cost savings from preventing one fall injury justifies 11 home health episodes. Referring patients for fall prevention saves money for Medicare while promoting the health and independence of your patients.

**Please offer fall injury prevention services from BVNAH to your patients.**

## References

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