

## StopFalls Network California Policy / Advocacy / Sustainability Workgroup Meeting Minutes 02/23/06

**Participants:** *Patricia Adkins, Denise Altomare, Sara Barnett, Lynn Beattie, Colleen Campbell, Ellen Corman, Mariann Cosby, Barb Hanna, Peggy Haynes, Alice, Kienzle, Elaine McMann, Michael Radetsky, Rachel Zerbo*

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Key Points</b>
<p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b> <i>Rachel Zerbo</i> <i>Fall Prevention Center of Excellence</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• StopFalls Policy Workgroup formed in September of 2005</li> <li>• As group talked about developing policy agenda, realized that it would be important to hear from those already involved in fall prevention policy at national level and in other states</li> <li>• Today's panel: Lynn Beattie and Patricia Adkins from National Falls Free Initiative; Peggy Haynes and Elaine McMann from Maine</li> </ul>
<p><b>Falls Free Initiative Background and Policy Involvement</b> <i>Lynn Beattie</i> <i>National Council on the Aging</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Falls Free Initiative is currently working on implementing 36 strategies outline in the National Action Plan</li> <li>• Another Initiative goal is to assist states by acting as a resource for state coalition activities</li> <li>• Background on Initiative: approximately 5 years ago, the various national organizations, including National Council on the Aging (NCOA), National Safety Council (NSC) initiated the Falls Free Alliance. Alliance work was done without financial support, which was extremely challenging. Most efforts of Alliance centered around putting together national fall prevention legislation. Many Alliance members were uncomfortable with this sort of work, as their status as public agencies prohibited them from lobbying activities. The legislation that was eventually put forth earmarked funding for one particular agency, and thus could not garner broad-based support from other agencies. This legislation was shelved.</li> <li>• The Falls Free Initiative, spearheaded by NCOA, resurrected this legislation when it was funded in 2004 by the Archstone Foundation and the Home Safety Council (HSC). Besides policy / advocacy work, the Initiative focuses on professional education, research, community-based demonstration projects, cost analysis, and a national awareness campaign. The priorities were identified at the 2004 Falls Free Summit attended by 58 coalition members and set forth in the Falls Free Action Plan.</li> <li>• The Initiative created an Advocacy Workgroup to push the resurrected bill forward. Leading groups in this effort ate NCOA, NSC, HSC. National Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Associations also involved.</li> <li>• Lesson learned from early legislation development process: Self-promotion doesn't help legislation flow in Congress – all names taken out when bill was resurrected.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Falls Free Advocacy Workgroup Update</b>  <i>Patricia Adkins</i>  <i>Home Safety Council</i></p>	<p><b>Some initial advice for beginning policy process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have groups come together early in process to candidly share positions on issue</li> <li>• Be very specific about how to move issue forward</li> <li>• Share contacts, colleagues, and information</li> <li>• Everyone needs to be on message and know how to function as a group.</li> <li>• Key is to be of one accord. Be consistent with statistics and with direction you want to go in.</li> <li>• Make sure that all facts are in one fact sheet</li> <li>• Legislative staffers are key. Don't underestimate their power. They remember the groups who come in and their message. They are the gatekeepers.</li> <li>• Approach both sides of the aisle (Dems and Reps)</li> <li>• Do research on what priorities legislators are concerned with and spin your message.</li> <li>• Find out who has been directly impacted by falls.</li> </ul> <p><b>Current Advocacy Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S1531 – Keeping Seniors Safe From Falls Act -- Rewrite of NSC bill, changes based on National Action Plan.</li> <li>• No on organization is taking the lead. CMS, CDC, AOA involved. Workgroup members went as a group to Hill to begin lobbying. This included VP for Public Policy at NSC, HSC, and Golan Harris, PR firm contracted to help with advocacy effort.</li> <li>• Clear version for both the House and Senate</li> <li>• Bill did not get out of Committee – Committee didn't have a staffer, so process was slow</li> <li>• Having money in the bill (\$75 million) does not mean that it will be authorized or allocated</li> <li>• 2007 budget has taken a major hit – but must be persistent. Have only been working on this for 2 years. Some legislation is 10-12 years old. Has to be the right environment. The process takes time, have to be willing to make compromises.</li> <li>• If you can increase awareness of general public on your issue, it will be a major victory.</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions:</b></p> <p><b>Q: Ellen Corman: Can we get copies of Fact Sheet, Advocacy Letter?</b>  A: Rachel will distribute.</p> <p><b>Q: Michael Radetsky: How does bill address resources for intervention?</b>  A: Includes funds for community-base demonstration projects; provisions for Medicare, Medicaid to reimburse for home improvements. Tried costing out for 5 years, but staffers freaked out with dollar amount. Strategy to focus on: hot to use just a small amount of money to leverage additional funding. Can interface with Dept. of Aging, CDC programs.</p>

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<p><b>Maine Fall Prevention Advocacy Experience</b>  <i>Peggy Haynes</i>  <i>Elaine McMann</i>  <i>Partnership for Health Aging</i></p>	<p><b>Background on advocacy effort</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State was grantee in Administration on Aging Program. Based on Fear of Falling at Boston University with goal of translating university project for use by lay leaders.</li> <li>• Needed 4 partners for grant, which include Partnership for Healthy Aging, Maine Agency on Aging, Division of Geriatrics at School of Social Work in Maine, Maine Department of Health Services.</li> <li>• Recruited Project Advisory Committee. Members: Elder Services Reps, IP, Geriatric Education Centers, Senior Network, Housing Authority, AARP.</li> <li>• Main project challenge was how to disseminate process to those working with seniors.</li> <li>• Adapted original Matter of Balance project materials, and then released RFP to Area Agencies on Aging and hospitals to become partners in project.</li> <li>• Recruited coaches to offer intervention – created master trainer sites throughout state that keep in touch through regular conference calls.</li> </ul> <p>Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy was to create a statewide web including Area Agencies on Aging, Health Maine Partnership, Regional Hospitals, YMCAs.</li> <li>• Took federal Falls Free bill and adapted it – mainly by decreasing the amount of money attached.</li> <li>• From start had broad-based coalition supporting efforts</li> <li>• Had to pull back on full proposal because of money attached. Framed an amendment that would formalize the coalition, add constituents, and include study on fall prevention to ID effective pilot projects. Had to pull back on actual funding to pilot projects. Fiscal note also directed coalition to do this work.</li> <li>• At the hearing all partners represented in testimony, including senior who took part in program.</li> <li>• Lesson learned: Because most work done in community, didn't look at repercussions for larger systems. As such, nursing home association didn't understand nature of bill and saw it as increasing regulations in their realm.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CA Workgroup Discussion on Next Steps</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colleen Campbell: there was a fall prevention bill in CA a few years ago. It may have the potential to be refreshed for future. We should look at the essence and then update so we don't recreate the wheel.</li> <li>• Barb Hanna: what will a consistent message on fall prevention with letter look like? ! pagers, fact easily communicated in 5 minutes. Include key statistics. Can put additional documentation behind one-pager.</li> <li>• Rachel will send out minutes for digestion, as well as key documents from National Advocacy Workgroup and Maine group.</li> <li>• <b>Will plan another call – Thursday 03/23, 9:00 – 10:30 am.</b></li> </ul>