



Preventing Falls Together

Community Action and Change 2005-2007

Prepared for
Community Links
by Susan Lilley
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As members of the East Hants Community Health Board, we have members from all sections of our area. We checked all public buildings and made a list of them and stated what we felt was good and any problems we felt would cause people to get hurt through a fall. We presented this to our municipal council and we find people are now paying attention and looking at this issue very closely.
(coalition member)

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INTRODUCTION

Preventing Falls Together (PFT) is a province-wide program of Community Links, designed to build capacity for falls prevention among staff and volunteers of organizations concerned with seniors, caregivers, veterans, injury prevention, and health and wellness. The initiative consists of three broad areas of activities: network development, coalition member education, and communication. These are illustrated in the program logic model (page 3).

Preventing Falls Together began as a project in 2002. Since April 2004, it has been funded by Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection (NSHPP), with an annual budget of \$100,000. In addition, NSHPP has contributed some meeting costs, funds for the evaluation, communications expertise and a number of communication products. As part of its contractual agreement with the provincial government, Community Links commissioned an evaluation in April 2006. This is the second of two resulting evaluation reports.

An interim evaluation report, produced in October 2006, looked at program implementation and reported on the following outcomes:

- increased number of organizations and sectors involved in falls prevention
- increased knowledge and skills for falls prevention
- increased awareness of the risk and impact of falls.

The evaluation found 10 falls prevention coalitions around the province, representing many organizations and sectors, and very high participant satisfaction with the education and communication activities. Those involved reported increased knowledge, skills and awareness. They also reported that coalitions were running out of steam. The report concluded that PFT has had tremendous success in raising awareness about falls and mobilizing diverse groups to take action. At the same time, the report had 29 recommendations for maintaining the momentum and increasing the initiative's impact. These are included in appendix A.

This second report examines what coalition members were able to accomplish with their increased knowledge and skills. PFT operates under the assumption that with increased capacity, coalition members will take action, both independently within their organizations and jointly as coalitions, to launch a variety of initiatives that contribute to reducing risks for falling. Reduced falls among seniors is, of course, the ultimate outcome. However, impacts at this level will always remain difficult to measure. Instead, the evaluation attempted to measure the program's impact on two intermediate program outcomes: community action and community changes that are likely to reduce falling. The earlier interim report captured intermediate outcomes to July 2006. This current report, *Community Action and Change*, updates those earlier results to include outcomes to end of January 2007.

Many of the outcomes described herein represent efforts of staff and coalition members working

together. Others were the work of individual coalition members within their organizations. A few activities were conducted by PFT staff on behalf of coalition members. However, all of the efforts were supported, assisted or facilitated, to a greater or lesser extent, by the provincial program. Most are unlikely to have occurred without Preventing Falls Together.

Method

The information included in this report is drawn from three primary sources, described briefly below. The broader PFT evaluation also included a staff log, key informant interviews and a review of program documents.

PFT coalition log¹

A log was designed to collect information about coalition activities and outcomes, in terms of changes in practices, programs and policies at a population level. The log was distributed to all coalitions, who were encouraged to fill it out immediately when an event or outcome occurred. The log was used retrospectively for the period from April 1, 2005 to April 1 2006. It was subsequently used in an ongoing manner by coalition members and PFT staff. Each coalition was given an opportunity to review and its information before inclusion in this report. The information was then coded according to a detailed coding framework that accompanies the tool. This report covers coalition activities and outcomes reported between April 1, 2005 and January 31, 2007.

Coalition member survey

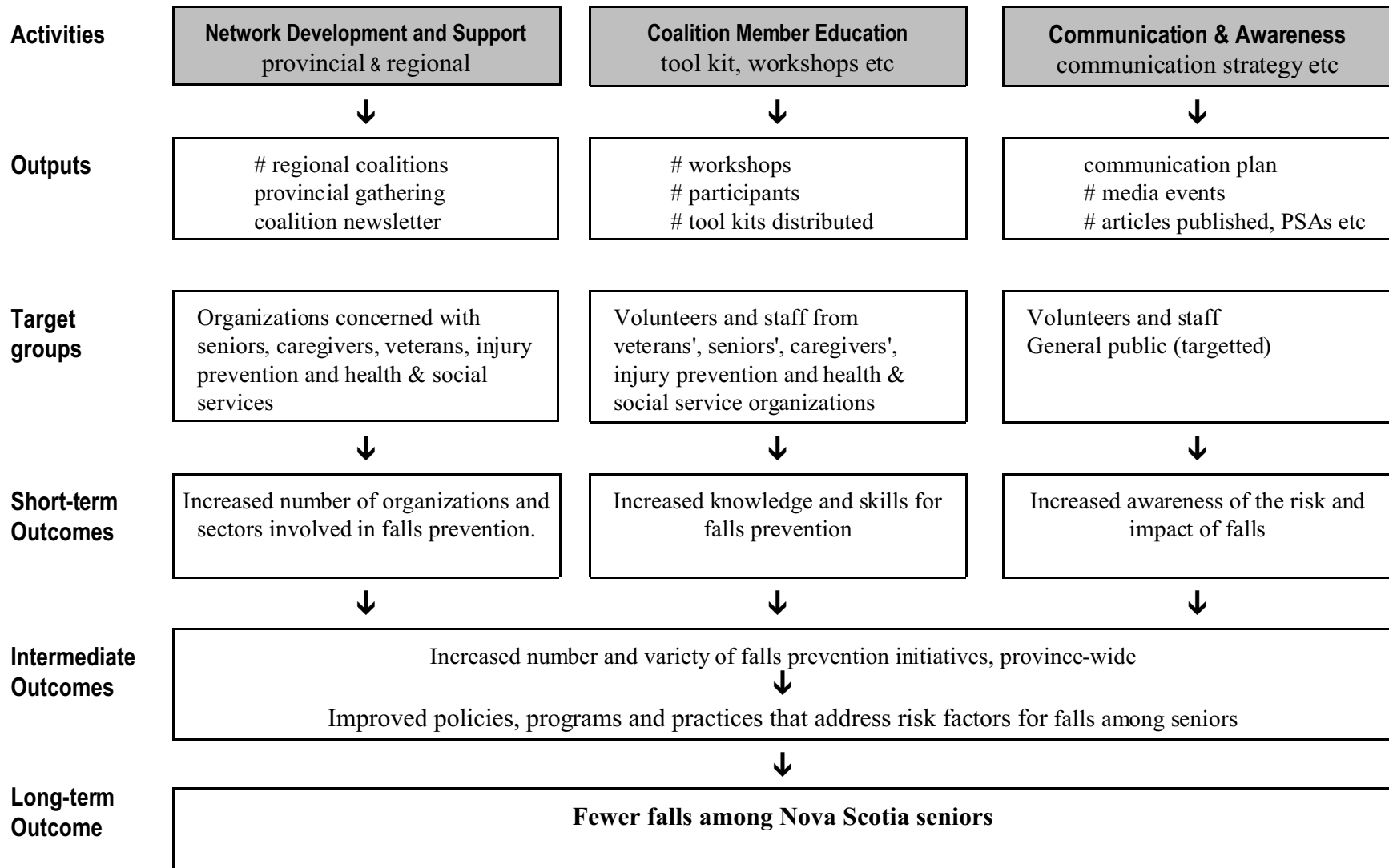
An anonymous written survey was distributed to all coalition members, either electronically, by mail, or at coalition meetings, in September 2006. This survey contained many of the same questions included in a similar survey of coalition members in January 2004. A database of approximately 156 coalition members, created in July 2006, was used for distributing the recent survey. This database included some people who had only attended a tool-kit orientation session. Two reminders were sent out electronically at one-week intervals. Members were also encouraged to complete the survey during coalition meetings. Thirty-three usable surveys were received (21%), a low response rate – much lower than the response in an earlier PFT evaluation (2004).

Places of Worship initiative feedback form

A mail-in feedback sheet was included in each of the estimated 220 packages distributed to places of worship in 2006. The survey enquired about use and value of the material in the packages. Only nine of the recipients returned a completed form. Although few in number, these responses contributed some examples of changes resulting from the initiative.

¹The coalition log is adapted from the work of Stephen Fawcett (1995), promoted by the Community Tool Box <http://ctb.ku.edu/index.jsp>.

Figure 1: Preventing Falls Together Logic Model



COALITION ACTION TO REDUCE FALLING

Eleven falls prevention coalitions have been active at some time during the past 2-3 years. This section describes and measures coalition members' activities to reduce falling, both collectively in communities and individually within their own organizations.

Increased Organizational Involvement

In the 2006 coalition member survey, only two respondents (7%) rated their organization's level of involvement in falls prevention *prior* to joining a PFT coalition as high. In contrast, 43% rated their organization's current involvement as high. Overall, 50% reported an increased level of organizational involvement in falls prevention. (Figure 2)

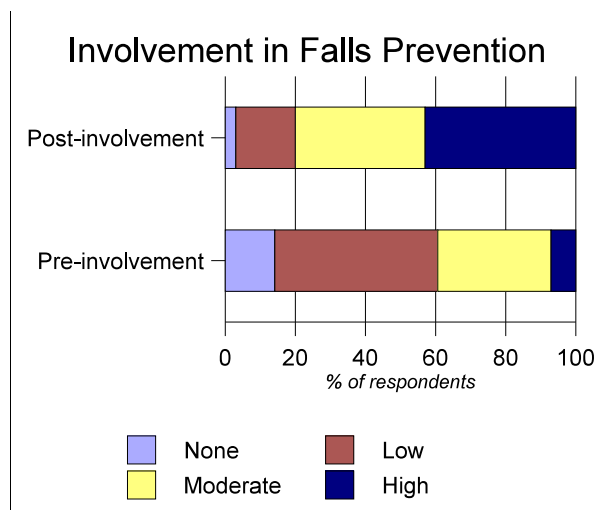


Figure 2 Personal assessment, by coalition members, of their organization's level of involvement in preventing seniors' falls, both before and since their involvement with PFT.

Although the pre-involvement figures are similar to those from the 2004 survey, post-involvement figures in 2006 are somewhat more positive than earlier numbers, suggesting a somewhat greater level of involvement today.

The activities that coalition members reported were numerous and varied. Figure 3 shows the number of activities reported by coalition members, over time, as well as resulting community changes.

Services Provided

Much of the work of coalitions consisted of service provision. For the purpose of tracking coalition activities, service provision was defined as *classes, workshops, presentations, publications or other services or communications provided by coalition members*. Most often, these were directed at seniors themselves. Many were aimed at service providers and other intermediaries as well as the general public.

By far the largest service was part of the province-wide Places of Worship campaign, which took place in November of both 2005 and 2006 as part of Falls Prevention Day. Information packages were produced provincially, with assistance of the NSHPP Communication staff, and delivered to churches by coalition members. The packages included a letter to the clergy, a falls proofing

checklist designed for use on church premises and multiple copies of information sheets for distribution with church bulletins. An estimated 25,000 bulletin inserts were sent out each year.

PFT Coalition Activity, Provincial Cumulative from April 1, 2005 to January 30, 2007

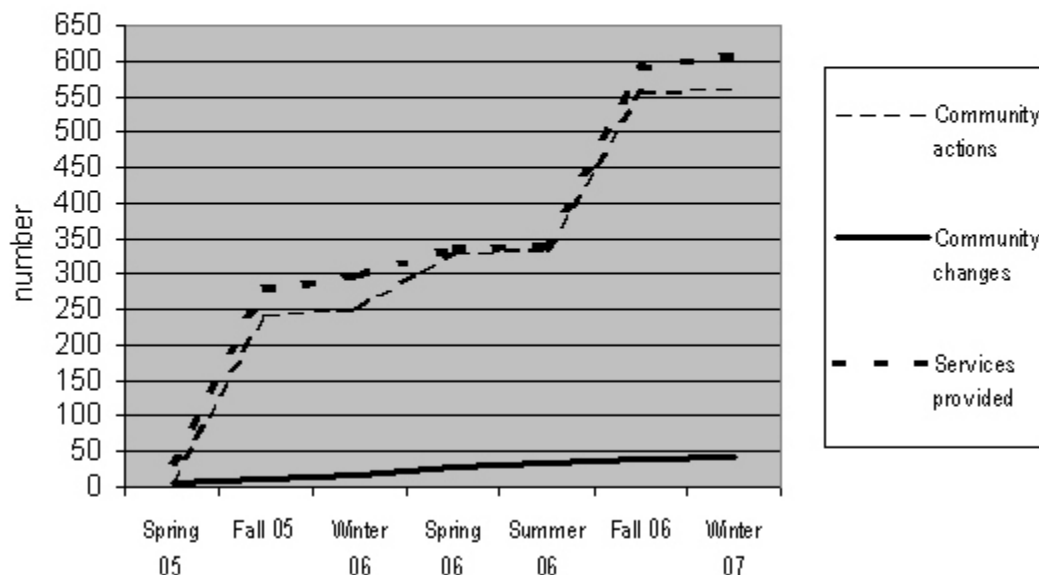


Figure 3 Coalition member activity and outcomes, cumulative from April 2005.

Services for seniors

In addition to the Places of Worship activities, coalitions reported organizing many displays, information booths and presentations aimed at raising seniors’ awareness about preventing falls. These are listed in appendix B. Four coalitions organized seniors’ workshops with a falls prevention focus. Three coalitions offered exercise programs for seniors, focussing on balance and falls prevention.

In most cases, coalitions did not track the number of seniors they reached with these activities. The numbers they *were* able to report, however, came to 4619 seniors. Numerous additional seniors outreach activities were reported that had the potential to reach several thousand seniors. For example, in Cape Breton falls prevention displays and handouts were set up at 155 flu clinics that were attended by 6075 people, mostly seniors. These numbers, together with those estimated as part of the Places of Worship campaigns, suggest that coalitions were able to reach many thousands of seniors with this type of awareness-raising activity.

Services for intermediaries

Two coalitions, (Colchester / East Hants, and HRM) aimed much of their awareness-raising activities at intermediaries, such as service providers and health authorities who work with seniors. Although coalitions were for the most part unable to provide numbers, they reported numerous and diverse audiences, including the following:

- VON volunteers
- members of various health boards and authorities, including many community health boards
- staff of several residential facilities
- Meals on Wheels volunteers
- town and municipal councils
- physical and occupational therapists
- homemakers and home care workers
- nurses and LPNs
- family caregivers.

Community Action

Beyond awareness-raising activities, all coalitions took action to try to bring about change. For the purpose of tracking coalition activity, community action was defined as *activities in communities or organizations to bring about changes in programs, policies or practices that reduce the risks of falling*. Over 550 community actions were reported over a two-year period.

By far the majority of these community actions took place as part of the Places of Worship campaign described earlier. The information packages, which were mostly delivered to church officials in person, included information and a checklist on eliminating hazards on church premises.

For four coalitions, the delivery of Places of Worship kits was the only action taken to try to bring about change. The remaining coalitions were more active in advocating for change. Together, coalition members province-wide reported approximately 113 community actions *in addition to* the Places of Worship initiative. Some examples are listed below and in Appendix B.

Action to increase availability of **education** about falls prevention:

- An education session to enable VON volunteer leaders of seniors' exercise programs to include falls prevention as part of their regular programming.
- Trainer training and tool kits provided to instructors in the continuing care assistant training program, for use in their program locally. A subsequent presentation and discussion at the annual provincial meeting of continuing care assistant educators encouraged them to incorporate PFT resources into their curriculum province-wide.
- Development of a teaching package for grades 4-6 and distribution to 183 teachers in three Cape Breton school boards.
- Hand delivery of packages with checklists and posters to 66 physician's offices, to encourage them to speak to their patients about falls prevention.

Action to increase availability of *strength and balance exercise* programs for seniors:

- Work with the community college fitness centre to develop a pilot fitness program focussing on balance and falls prevention for seniors.

Action to promote *environmental modifications*:

- Letters to encourage local businesses to provide seating for seniors in their establishments, hand delivered to Save Easy and Dollar Store, Guysborough, and the Co-op, and pharmacy, Canso.
- Meeting with Pictou County Municipalities Crime Prevention Association to encourage them to seek funding for home falls assessments.
- Meetings with Truro town and Colchester County officials and staff to encourage them to identify, advertise, and promote existing senior-friendly trails and to adapt other trails on an ongoing basis, using a trails assessment checklist created for this purpose.
- Meetings, training and resource material to encourage 12 volunteer fire departments to include falls prevention in any safety presentations and home assessments they offer as part of their regular programming.
- Meetings to request that a planned waterfowl park be designed with senior-friendly walkways, rest areas, stairs and trail surfaces.
- Pressure to encourage Exhibition Park and the NS Seniors' Secretariat to run all electrical cords overhead rather than across walkways at the Fifty Plus Expo.
- Presentations to encourage Homemaker Services' homemakers to identify hazards in the homes they visit and report them to their supervisors.
- Presentation to encourage nurses and LPNs in East Hants to use falls assessment tools in their places of work.
- Presentation to the Council of Community Health Board Chairs in Cape Breton, advocating use of falls prevention checklists for sites where CHB-funded projects take place.
- Falls hazards assessment of Meals on Wheels / New Dawn workplace.
- At Milford Haven Home for Special Care's Occupational Health and Safety Committee, damaged cement walkways were brought up as a falls hazard and recommendations made to replace them.
- Delivery of Places of Worship kits to hundreds of leaders of congregations.

Media Coverage

Coalitions reported a total of 44 instances of media coverage. Ten of 11 coalitions reported their own local radio, newspaper and cable TV coverage, often promoting or reporting on their falls prevention events. Some coalitions, most notably Halifax and Lunenburg-Queens, reported several media items. A few examples of the many instances of media coverage:

- Articles in newsletters of the following organizations: Veterans Affairs, Royal Canadian Legion, Eastern Shore CHB, Metro Housing, Northwood, Capital Health, Community Links, Chebucto Links.
- Article with picture in the Antigonish Casket describing the initial PFT meeting, the program and the development of the coalition.
- Three articles in Cape Breton Post, publicizing the Don't Fiddle with Falls event and Falls

Prevention Day, and reporting on a falls hazards presentation to a grade 3 class at Brookland Elementary School in Sydney.

- Tips and facts on falls prevention appearing weekly in a regular seniors' column in the Guysborough Journal.
- Article in a south shore newspaper about the Report on Seniors Falls in Canada.
- Newspaper article about revitalizing the Lunenburg-Queens association, leading up to the Seniors' Lifestyle Show.
- Two articles in the Kentville Advertiser reporting on a falls prevention presentation to a seniors' fitness class and a Bone China tea.
- Falls prevention PSAs played regularly on Northwood community radio station and at the Capital Health Falls Clinic.

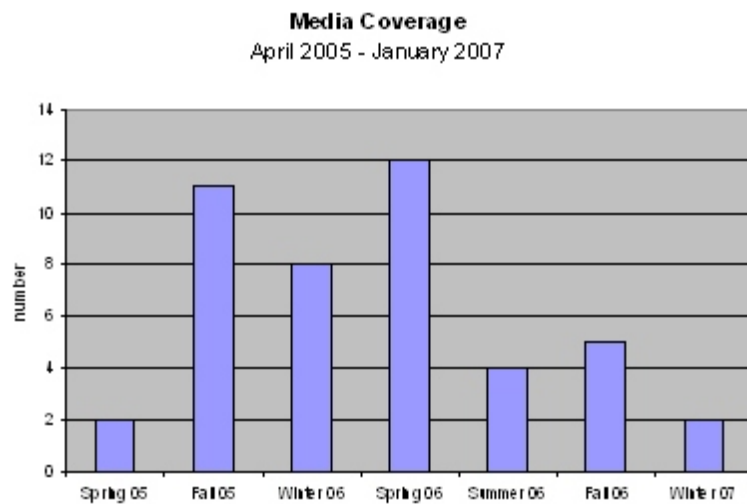


Figure 4 Media coverage reported by coalitions, including coverage in organizational newsletters.

Key findings on action to reduce falling

- Half the coalition members surveyed reported that their organization is more involved in falls prevention now than prior to their joining the coalition. Nearly half rated their organization's level of activity as high.
- Coalitions reported numerous and varied activities aimed at reducing falling during the two-year tracking period.
- Much of the work reported by coalitions consisted of raising awareness about falls prevention, with seniors, intermediaries and the general public. They generated considerable local media coverage for the issue. Their activities overall are estimated to have reached many thousands of seniors.
- Coalition efforts to bring about change in communities and organizations were aimed at either increasing the availability of education about falls or bringing about environmental changes.
- Delivery of resource material to places of worship was the most widespread coalition activity. Staff estimate the number of congregations reached at 350 in 2005 and 220 in 2006, with a potential reach of 25,000 people per year. The initiative attempted to both increase awareness and bring about environmental changes to reduce falling.

CHANGES IN COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Coalition members were asked to report any *new or modified programs, policies or practices in communities or organizations that resulted either partly or entirely from their activity*. In many cases, coalitions did not know whether their activity had resulted in change. However, coalitions were able to report 41 changes made to reduce falling during the last two years. Figure 3 shows slow but constant change. The changes reported are described very briefly below. Three coalitions, Guysborough, Halifax and Colchester / East Hants, were responsible for most of these. In the latter two coalitions, changes were brought about by coalition members themselves, within their own workplaces.

Education:

- The IWK's Women's Health and Menopause program, offered to over 500 women around the province, included falls prevention content.
- Veterans Affairs Canada incorporated falls prevention content into regular staff meetings.
- Falls prevention training is now mandatory for all new staff at Colchester Regional Hospital and is included in patient transfer training for RNs and LPNs.
- Brookfield Fire Department's regular safety programs now include falls prevention.
- Lunenburg Pro Hardware put a falls prevention display in its window last winter.
- Home Instead Seniors' Care now offers falls prevention training to new and existing staff.
- Scotiacare Homecare & Caregivers Inc now incorporates falls prevention awareness into their staff training program and service packages. The firm also offers falls prevention talks to community groups along the Eastern Shore.
- Care Strategies Inc incorporated falls prevention content into their caregiver workshops and client folders.
- A private physiotherapy clinic in Truro now addresses falls prevention with patients, using material from the toolkit.
- A firm that offers a wellness program in the Brookfield fire hall has added falls prevention content to its program.
- FutureWorx in Truro has added falls prevention content to their Continuing Care Assistant Training Program, using tool kit resources.
- Home Instead Seniors' Care has included falls assessment in the package of home care services they offer.
- Falls prevention material is now included in a package of information on travel safety, provided on request by HRM Safe Communities.
- VON SMART exercise sessions have incorporated falls prevention information and strategies into programs offered at seven sites in Colchester / East Hants.

Strength and balance exercise programs for seniors:

- Weekly seniors' fitness classes are now offered in 5 communities in Digby County.
- The NS Community College fitness centre in Truro now offers a regular fitness program for seniors focussing on balance and falls prevention.
- The Guysborough County District Medical Centre now offers a regular seniors' exercise class.

- A seniors' exercise program that was about to end was taken on and continued by Shamrock Seniors' Club in Guysborough County.
- A seniors' exercise program is now available at Isaac's Harbour Villa, Guysborough County.

Environmental modifications:

- Fluorescent strips were installed on steps of St. Peter's Parish Hall in Larry's River, Guysborough County.
- Seating for seniors was provided for the first time at annual picnic in Larry's River.
- Anti-slip strips were installed on front steps of District Medical Centre at Isaac's Harbour, Guysborough County.
- Emergency lighting, light above exit doors and a new door for ramp were installed at Canso United Baptist Church, Guysborough County.
- Canso Save Easy has placed seating near the doors.
- Edges of steps of St. Ann's Church, Guysborough were painted yellow.
- Northwood Manor, Halifax, installed a handrail down the centre of a stairway.
- In both Truro and Guysborough, First Baptist churches have made changes to reduce the risk of falling: improvements to a stairway and removal of scatter rugs.
- The Meals on Wheels / New Dawn workplace in Sydney has made "small changes" following a risk assessment.
- A seniors' snow shoveling program was started in Digby.

Clinical assessment and intervention:

- A falls risk review is now done for all physiotherapy patients at Colchester Regional Hospital; those at risk receive information on prevention.
- A falls-prevention protocol was created for use in all occupational therapy and physiotherapy home visits in Capital Health.

Other, more general outcomes:

- The mandate of the South Shore Integrated Falls Prevention Committee now includes falls prevention for outpatients and those leaving the hospital; they also are keeping better data on falls. A staff person has recently been hired to review falls prevention strategies

Key findings on changes in communities and organizations

- For the most part, coalition members do not know whether their efforts are resulting in change. Even so, coalitions were able to report 41 changes made by organizations and communities to reduce falling. Most of these changes were made by coalition members themselves, acting within their own organizations.
- The changes reported by coalition members primarily reflect increased availability of education for seniors about falling, however, a few local exercise programs, environmental changes and clinical interventions were also reported.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Although this evaluation was able to capture coalition activity during only 20 months of the last three years, it confirms that the coalition model works. Collectively, coalitions have been very active in promoting falls prevention at a very local level, province-wide. Coalition members are taking action and changes are indeed occurring in communities and organizations.

Coalitions in Guysborough County, Halifax Regional Municipality and Colchester / East Hants all reported several outcomes of their activities. These three groups reflect the diversity of PFT coalitions. In Guysborough County, the PFT group is a coalition of rural communities, consisting of grass-roots volunteers representing the various communities. The changes they reported occurred in these communities.

In contrast, groups in HRM and Colchester / East Hants are coalitions of organizations. Members are mostly professionals, many of whom have authority to make decisions within local, provincial or even federal agencies. Most of the changes they reported were the result of their own individual efforts, within their organizations and workplaces.

The evaluation shows that both types of coalitions can be effective in bringing about change. One of the strengths of PFT is staff ability to support a variety of coalition models within an overall provincial program.

The Places of Worship initiative has been particularly effective in mobilizing coalitions to take action to bring about change. It is a good example of a collaborative activity that could only succeed with both central leadership and local implementation. It included both awareness raising and community action; education and environmental change. Coalitions need more examples of how they can work together to bring about changes beyond their own direct spheres of influence. These should be considered as part of the annual action planning process.

The evaluation results also suggest that coalitions need support in tracking outcomes of their work. Beyond their own organizations, coalitions have no systematic way of knowing whether their work is making a difference. Future PFT initiatives, particularly more ambitious ones such as Places of Worship, should have a built-in evaluation component. With guidance and support, coalitions can not only bring about change in the broader community but also recognize their successes in this capacity.

To what extent has the program contributed to reducing falls among seniors?

Assessing the impact of PFT on the actual rate of falling in Nova Scotia was not foreseen in this phase of evaluation. However, we can speculate on the extent to which PFT is likely to have this type of impact by reviewing the evidence base for falls prevention.

The changes that resulted from PFT fall into four broad strategies: education, physical exercise, clinical intervention and environmental modification. The evidence linking each of these

approaches to falls reduction is summarized very briefly below.

Programs combining a variety of falls prevention strategies tend to be most effective, particularly when they focus on the factors that place an individual at risk.^{1, 2, 3}

Education

Although education programs for older people are commonly used in falls prevention, there is little evidence of their effectiveness when used alone.^{1,2,3} Two underlying assumptions of education approaches are 1) that older people acknowledge that they are at risk and 2) that increased awareness will translate into behaviour change. There is little evidence to support these assumptions.²

Education may play an important role in multi-faceted falls prevention programs.^{1,3} Programs that go beyond awareness raising, using adult education approaches, may have a greater likelihood of success.^{2,3} Education of health care workers to increase their ability to address falls prevention may prove to be more effective than education aimed at seniors themselves.²

Physical exercise

There is strong evidence that exercise programs that incorporate some degree of balance training are effective in reducing falls among community dwelling seniors. Walking, aerobic and resistance training programs have also been shown to reduce loss of bone density, which has the potential to reduce risk of fracture.^{2,3} Physical activity must be regular and sustained to be effective. Not all physical activity is helpful and some may do more harm than good.^{1,2,3}

Clinical intervention

Physical assessments by health professionals trained in falls prevention, followed by an individualized falls prevention plan can be effective in reducing falls and related injuries.³ There is also increasing evidence that medication review and reduction can reduce falling.^{1, 2, 3} Trained health visitors or volunteers can be effective in screening seniors for falls risks and identifying appropriate actions to reduce risks, however, whether this type of intervention reduces falling needs further study.²

Environmental modifications

There is growing evidence that home hazard assessment and modification programs may be effective in reducing falls, particularly when undertaken by trained health professionals such as occupational therapists and when targeting people at increased risk of falling.² The success of these programs is increased when combined with education and counseling. Programs that include financial and/or manual assistance to make home repairs are most successful.¹

As for reducing hazards in public places, the effectiveness of these types of changes has not been formally evaluated due to the methodological challenges involved. It is known, however, that for well, active, older people, falls occur more commonly away from home and these falls are associated with higher injury rates.²

The evaluation showed that PFT has had a hand in bringing about some change in each of the

above categories. Most changes, however, can best be described as increased education, often only information, about falls prevention. Research suggests that this type of change, on its own, is unlikely to reduce the incidence of falling.

That said, PFT is only one component of a broader provincial falls prevention strategy. The awareness-raising accomplished by coalitions is creating a supportive social environment for change, within this broader strategy. Other components of the provincial strategy, such as the new provincial Guidelines to Best Practices for Clinical Assessment for Falls Prevention, may provide the missing elements. Coalitions could play a role in promoting uptake of these guidelines in their local areas.

PFT coalitions can make a difference as one part of a comprehensive falls prevention strategy. To do so, they will need ongoing support to refocus, increase and monitor their activities, using a more comprehensive range of falls prevention strategies.

Concluding observations

Over the past three years, Preventing Falls Together has had tremendous success in mobilizing diverse groups to take action and in raising awareness about falls. Working together, PFT staff, coalition members and NSHPP have reached many thousands of seniors with information about falls and how they can be prevented. The initiative is remarkable in its approach and in the success it has achieved thus far. The same resources, spent on a provincial NSHPP staff person, would be unlikely to have nearly as much reach into Nova Scotia communities.

Awareness raising, however, is only the first step in reducing falls in the province. To bring about change, PFT must move beyond awareness raising towards greater community action. While this evaluation report highlights PFT's many accomplishments, the earlier interim report (2006) identified numerous opportunities for increasing its impact. With a refocussing of efforts towards increased, more collaborative and more evidence-based community action, Preventing Falls Together has the potential to significantly reduce the incidence of seniors' falls in Nova Scotia.

REFERENCES

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2. National Ageing Research Institute (2004) *An Analysis of Research on Preventing Falls Injury in Older People: Community, Residential Care and Hospital Settings*. Report to the Australian Government, Department of Health and Ageing, Injury Prevention Section.
3. Scott VJ, S Dukeshire, EM Gallagher and A Scanlan (2001) *A Best Practices Guide for the Prevention of Falls among Seniors Living in the Community*. Report prepared for the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors. Available at: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/seniors-aines

Appendix A: RECOMMENDATIONS (October 2006)

1. Continue efforts to develop coalitions in DHA 2 and DHA 5.
2. Seek out new partners and explore ways to engage diverse cultural groups.
3. Seek out new sources of funding for expanded work with minority cultural and language groups.
4. Organize a provincial gathering of coalitions early each fall.
5. Investigate use of the TeleHealth system for provincial gatherings on alternate years.
6. Refocus the quarterly update and website to provide greater coverage of coalition activity.
7. Develop clear criteria for deciding whether to provide staff support to coalitions.
8. Develop guidelines for withdrawing support from coalitions that do not meet these criteria.
9. Revive the provincial PFT partnership, focussing on organizations with staff or members in local communities.
10. Work with DHAs at higher levels with the aim of getting their representation on all coalitions, through their community health staff.
11. Provide a means for everyone interested in community-based falls prevention to connect with each other around the province.
12. Increase the provincial coordinator position to full-time.
13. Provide administrative support for PFT.
14. Hire a part-time field worker in northern Nova Scotia.
15. Maintain a fund that coalitions can access for special projects of up to \$1000.
16. Provide a tool kit CD to anyone who attends two or more coalition meetings.
17. Revise tool kits with the latest statistical data and research on falls.
18. Incorporate information on best practices in presentations, the tool kit and action planning.
19. Reproduce hard copies of the revised tool kit as soon as possible.
20. Make it a priority to provide new coalition members with an orientation to the tool kit and population health approach in a timely manner.
21. Development of a provincial communications strategy should be the responsibility of the intersectoral committee rather than PFT.
22. Continue linking coalition activity to a provincial falls prevention communication strategy.
23. Clarify that the role of PFT staff is capacity building rather than falls awareness.
24. Limit PFT staff involvement in health and seniors' fairs and public presentations.
25. Reinvest in capacity building among coalition members to fulfill these communication roles.
26. Take steps provincially and locally to engage a diverse mix of "people of influence" who can make changes from within.
27. Provide coalitions with models of collaborative activities to bring about change and use these as part of the action planning process.
28. Use the Places of Worship approach as a model for developing new province-wide initiatives.
29. Include an evaluation component in plans for future province-wide initiatives.

Appendix B: PROVINCIAL COMPILATION OF COALITION MEMBER ACTIVITIES

April 1, 2005 - January 31, 2007

The activities and changes listed below were reported by PFT coalition members. Many entries represent the efforts of staff and coalition members working together. Others were the work of individual coalition members within their organizations. A few activities were conducted by PFT staff on behalf of coalition members. However, all of the efforts were supported, assisted or facilitated, to a greater or lesser extent, by the provincial program. Most are unlikely to have occurred without Preventing Falls Together.

Community Changes

New or modified programs, policies or practices that reduce risks for falling, in communities or organizations, facilitated by PFT.

- Weekly seniors' exercise program started at Isaac's Harbour Villa (2007)
- Antigonish Education Centre marked stair edges following class presentations (2006)
- Fluorescent strips installed on steps of St. Peter's Parish Hall in Larry's River (2006)
- Seating for seniors provided at Larry's River annual picnic (2006)
- Anti-slip strips installed on front steps of District Medical Centre in Isaac's Harbour (2006)
- Emergency lighting, light above exit doors and a new door for ramp installed at Canso United Baptist Church (2006)
- Canso Save Easy has placed seating near the doors (2006)
- Edges of steps of St. Ann's Church, Guysborough, were painted yellow (2006)
- Seniors' walking programs in Enfield and Milford now have use of schools during off-school hours for walking indoors in winter (2005, 2006)
- Continuing education for RNs and LPNs in Colchester East Hants DHA now includes PFT falls assessment tools (2006)
- Falls prevention is now included as a component of family caregivers workshops offered by Halifax-based Care Strategies Inc. (2006)
- Care Strategies Inc also now includes PFT checklists in client folders (2006)
- Seniors Snow Shoveling Program created in Digby (2006)
- Northwood Manor, in Halifax, installed a handrail down the centre of a stairway to encourage exercise and reduce risk of falling (2006)
- Falls prevention information has been incorporated into regular staff meetings of Veterans' Affairs Canada staff in Halifax (2006)
- Falls prevention training is now offered to new and existing staff of Halifax-based Home

Instead Seniors' Care (2006)

- Home Instead Seniors' Care has also included falls assessment in the package of home care services offered to clients (2006)
- Falls prevention advice and checklist are now included in a package of information on travel safety, provided on request by HRM Safe Communities (2006)
- "Small changes" were made to reduce hazards at the Meals on Wheels / New Dawn workplace in Sydney, following a risk assessment (2006)
- South Shore Health has hired a part-time person to review falls prevention strategies, with an initial focus on acute care needs (2006)
- Improvements to the steps of First Baptist Church in Truro (2006)
- A commercial "wellness provider" has added falls prevention awareness to the wellness program offered in the Brookfield fire hall (2006)
- Brookfield Fire Department now includes falls prevention as part of their regular safety programs (2006)
- Twice weekly seniors exercise class now offered by Isaac's Harbour District Medical Centre (2006)
- Several changes made at First Baptist Church in Guysborough County, after a falls risk assessment, including removal of scatter rugs (2006)
- A seniors' exercise program that was about to end was taken on and continued by Shamrock Seniors' Club (2006)
- Lunenburg Pro Hardware put a falls prevention display in its window over the winter (2006)
- Colchester Regional Hospital Physiotherapy Department now covers falls prevention information in patient transfer training, now mandatory for all RNs and LPNs (2006)
- Falls prevention training made mandatory for all new Colchester Regional Hospital staff (2005)
- A falls risk review is now done for all physiotherapy patients of Colchester Regional Hospital; those at risk receive information on prevention. (2005)
- Falls prevention information and strategies incorporated into all VON SMART exercise sessions at 7 sites in Cape Breton (2005)
- The Continuing Care Assistant training program in Colchester County, offered by Future Worx, now includes falls prevention materials. The course is offered twice a year (2005)
- The NS Community College fitness centre (Truro) now offers an ongoing fitness program for seniors focussing on balance and falls prevention; 20-30 participants per course, offered 3 times in 2005
- A Truro private physiotherapy clinic now addresses falls prevention with patients, using material from toolkit (2005)
- The South Shore Integrated Falls Prevention Committee is now concerned with falls prevention issues for those leaving the hospital and visiting ER with injuries, in addition to acute care falls prevention; they also are keeping better data on falls (2005)
- Falls prevention was incorporated into a program on Women's Health and Menopause offered to women around the province by the IWK (2005)
- Scotiacare Homecare & Caregivers Inc (Halifax) now incorporates falls prevention awareness into their staff training program and service packages (2005)
- Scotiacare Homecare & Caregivers Inc also promotes "falls prevention talks" to community groups particularly in rural areas on the Eastern Shore (2005)

Community Actions

Activities in communities or organizations to bring about changes in programs, policies or practices that reduce the risks of falling.

- Information and FP checklists delivered to approximately 220 place of worship (2006)
- Conducted a preliminary assessment of three trails using trails FP checklist (2006)
- Approached municipality to obtain permission for pre-existing seniors' walking program to use the Enfield school for walking indoors in winter (2006)
- Presentation to RNs and LPNs in East Hants, encouraging them to use PFT falls assessment tools in their work, 32 attended (2006)
- Letters to encourage local businesses to provide seating for seniors in their establishments were hand delivered to Save Easy and Dollar Store, Guysborough, and the Co-op and pharmacy, Canso (2006)
- Presentation to Council of Chairs of CHBs in Cape Breton, advocating use of falls prevention checklists for sites where CHB-funded projects take place (2006)
- Conducted falls hazards assessment of Meals on Wheels / New Dawn workplace, Sydney (2006)
- Met with members of all 12 Colchester East Hants volunteer fire departments, provided training and handouts, to encourage departments to include falls prevention in any safety presentations and home assessments they offer as part of their regular (volunteer) duties (2006)
- Requirement that a commercial "wellness provider" who has applied to use the Brookfield Fire Hall include falls prevention content, as a condition to using the fire hall (2006)
- Coalition member requested that a planned water fowl park in Brookfield be senior friendly and safe; specifically requested senior-friendly walkways, rest areas, easy stairs and trail surfaces; partners have agreed to these requests (2006)
- Hand delivery of packages of resource material from the tool-kit to 66 Colchester County physician's offices, to encourage them to speak to their patients about falls prevention (2006)
- Participation of Colchester County Trails Coordinator in a coalition meeting, to discuss seniors' safety on trails and potential action (2006)
- Meeting with Colchester County Trails Coordinator to set goals and create a plan to identify, assess and promote senior friendly trails (2006 and ongoing)
- Falls risk assessment completed at First Baptist Church, Truro (2006)
- Damaged walkways were identified as a falls hazard and recommendations were made to replace them, during an Occupational Health and Safety Committee meeting at Milford Haven Home for Special Care (2006)
- Regular participation in South Shore Health Integrated Falls Prevention Committee, to represent perspective of community dwelling seniors and contribute to the development of a falls prevention strategy for South Shore Health DHA (2005-2006)
- Presentation and discussion at annual provincial meeting of continuing care assistant educators, encouraging them to incorporate falls prevention into their curriculum (2006)
- Information and checklists delivered to over 340 places of worship; approximately 25,000 bulletin inserts distributed (2005)

- Most homemakers from Homemaker Services in Cape Breton received a one-hour information session on falls prevention, aimed at having them report hazards to their supervisors (2005)
- Falls prevention education session for volunteer leaders of seniors' exercise program (VON SMART) from 7 sites in Cape Breton; material provided so they can include prevention activities in their regular programming (2005)
- Met with Colchester County and Truro officials to request that seniors be included in the Mayors' Challenge to encourage citizens to be active (2005)
- Created a trails assessment checklist and took it to Truro officials to encourage them to promote existing senior-friendly trails and adapt other trails on an ongoing basis (2005)
- Falls prevention trainer training provided to 4 instructors of Continuing Care Assistant program in Colchester County, with tool-kits (2005)
- Worked with the NS Community College fitness centre (Truro) to develop a pilot fitness program for seniors, focussing on balance and falls prevention (2005)
- Regular participation in South Shore Safe Communities meetings, to contribute to their mandate of disseminating information about falls prevention to seniors along the south shore (2005 & 2006)
- Pressure to Exhibition Park and Seniors' Secretariat to have them run all electrical cords overhead rather than across walkways at Fifty Plus Expo (2005, 2006)
- Creation of a FP home visit protocol for use in all OT/PT visits in Capital Health (2005)

Services Provided

These include classes, programs, workshops, publications or other services or communications provided by coalition members.

Display boards set up for many events and groups:

- Healthy living presentation for Tiverton seniors (reached 50+ seniors) (2007)
- Alzheimer conference, Halifax (fall 06)
- Lockhartville Community Hall open house (2006)
- First Nations Glooscap Community Hall health fair, Bishopville (2006)
- Caregivers Nova Scotia open house (2006)
- Antigonish County Economic Crime Summit for Seniors (40) (2006)
- Lawton's Drugs Seniors' Day, Antigonish (2006)
- Valley Regional Hospital Safety Day (2006)
- Northwood Health Fair, Hfx (200+) (2006)
- Gerontology Association of NS conference (80) (2006)
- Seniors Café in New Glasgow (2006)
- Flu shot clinics in Cape Breton, Isaac's Harbour (2006)
- Inverness on the Move health fairs, in Cheticamp (25), Inverness (50), and Wycocomagh (2006)
- Guysborough drug store (30) (2006)
- Seniors' Fun Day in Larry's River (100) (2006)

- Well women's clinic in Guysborough County (15) (2006)
- Community events in New Ross, Tancook Island, and Bridgewater (500+ seniors) (2005)
- Seniors Games in Inverness (~70) (2005)
- Seniors' expos in many communities (2005, 2006)

Falls prevention booths at several health fairs and events:

- 50+ Expo, West Hants (400+) (2006)
- Bone China Tea, Windsor (2006)
- Guysborough Antigonish Strait DHA Health Fair (200+) (2006)
- Mahone Bay Healthy Lifestyles Expo (80+) (2006)
- Healthy You show at Exhibition Park in Halifax (2006)
- Celebrating 50+ in West Hants (~400) (2005)

Presentations to raise awareness of falls prevention with many groups:

- Dartmouth East Rotary Club (18 participants) (2007)
- Residents of Isaac's Harbour Villa (10) (2007)
- Billtown Baptist Church Auxiliary (27) (2007)
- Centreville Community Centre (26) (2007)
- Staff of We Care, Hfx (6) (2006)
- East Hants Community Resource Centre (1) (2006)
- Brookfield men's community group (15-18) (2006)
- NS Public Service Commission, Halifax (7) (2006)
- Antigonish CHB (15) (2006)
- Residents of Eastern Regional Housing Authority in Isaac's Harbour, Little Dover, Pines Manor, Carleton Apartments, Maple Manor and Scotia Heights (41) (2006)
- Grade 3 students at Antigonish Education Centre (2006)
- Shamrock Seniors' club, Canso (14) (2006)
- Residents of Milford Haven Home for Special Care, Guysborough (5) (2006)
- Port Williams Health Auxiliary (16) (2006)
- Physiotherapists and occupational therapists of Annapolis Valley DHA (20) (2006)
- Lockhartville Elders Club (30) (2006)
- 50+ Seniors Club, West Hants (2006)
- Ladies Hospital Auxiliary, Windsor (30) (2006)
- Rotary Club, Windsor (10) (2006)
- Jolly Seniors, Windsor (70+) (2006)
- Four seniors' groups in Digby County: Weymouth, New Horizons, Tiverton Super Seniors and Westport Seniors (60) (2006)
- Dartmouth Stroke Club (30) (2006)
- Staff at Milford Haven Home (2006)
- Isaac's Harbour District Medical Centre, Board of Directors (2006)
- Alma Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary (2006)
- Alzheimer Support Group in Pictou County (2006)
- Meals on Wheels volunteers' appreciation luncheon in Lunenburg County (60) (2006)
- Children at Chedabucto Educational Centre, Guysborough County (2006)
- Seniors' Council of Debert, Stewiacke, Tatamagouche and Brookfield (2005, 2006)

- Seniors' Council of Colchester East Hants (2005, 2006)
- VON volunteers in CBRM (2005)
- Two town and municipal councils, Colchester County (2005)
- Union Centre Women's Institute (2005)
- Grade 3 class at Brookland Elementary School, Sydney (2005)
- Gladys Manning Memorial Home, Windsor (55) (2005)
- Seniors groups in New Germany, Martin's River, Bridgewater, Lunenburg (~200) (2005)
- Many other seniors groups

Written information on falls prevention distributed via other organizations, including:

- VON along Noel Shore (2007)
- VON Colchester County (2006)
- Annapolis Valley Regional Library (2007)
- Health Connections Resource Centre in Antigonish (2007)
- Eastern Shore detachment of the RCMP (2006)
- Goldboro/Isaac's Harbour Interpretive Centre (2006)

Exercise programs for seniors offered in several communities:

- 5 communities in Digby county (2007)
- 16-week Tai-Chi programs offered in Debert and Great Village (2005 & 2006)
- Isaac's Harbour (2006, 2007)
- Annapolis County (20) (2006, 2007)

Other services provided:

- Assessing Health at Home, a full-day workshop for seniors organized by Pictou County VON with coalition support, focussed on falls awareness/prevention, including a presentation and several displays relating to falls prevention, a falls prevention "wheel of fortune" and a bingo with falls prevention questions. ~100 participants (2006)
- Estimated 25,000 falls prevention inserts distributed to churches for bulletins, in both 2005 and 2006
- Falls prevention content added to Colchester Seniors' Council session on Maximizing Independence for Seniors (35) (2006)
- Christmas gift list distributed to families of VON clients, Colchester East Hants (fall 06)
- Home inspections conducted by RCMP Seniors Safety Program in Digby County (2006, 2007)
- Falls prevention message added to presentations offered regularly by the IWK on Women's Health and Menopause, 25-30 presentations offered around the province (roughly 4/month), 500+ participants (2005-06)
- Presentation on falls prevention and assessment to 40 seniors from the community, in collaboration with Capital Health, Holiday Inn, and the Annapolis Valley coalition (2006)
- Falls prevention information and checklist were provided as a component of an 8-week workshop for family caregivers, offered by Care Strategies Inc for the Public Service Commission (10) (2006)
- Two presentations to Capital Health physiotherapist groups on the Report on Seniors' Falls in Canada (12) (2006)

- Demonstration on assistive devices for all nurses who visit veterans' homes, organized by VAC Director of Nursing in collaboration with a retailer (2006)
- Falls prevention training offered to staff of Halifax-based Home Instead Seniors' Care, to increase their awareness and vigilance when in seniors' homes (2006)
- Hazardous house activity with Happy Tracadonians Seniors' club (2006)
- Skit on falls prevention performed by Margaree Seniors' Club at Seniors' Games in Baddeck (~ 275) (2005)
- Two presentations on seniors' fitness and bone-friendly cooking, at Seniors' Games in Baddeck (2005)
- Don't Fiddle with Falls, a half-day falls awareness ceildh for seniors - with panel discussions, displays & exercise, offered twice: in both urban (#s?) and rural (38) Cape Breton (2005)
- All staff physiotherapists of Colchester East Hants DHA trained on falls awareness (2005)
- Three lunch and learn sessions for staff of Colchester East Hants DHA (50) (2005)
- Lively Living for Seniors event in Lunenburg County, with speakers and booths on a variety of topics related to falls (50) (2005)
- Display in Lunenburg pharmacy of falls-safe Christmas gifts for seniors (2005)

Media Coverage

Coverage of PFT or its projects in the media, including radio, television, newspapers and organization newsletters.

- PSAs re winter falls safety aired on Annapolis County radio station (2006, 2007)
- Article in Antigonish Casket about PFT partnership and night light project (2006)
- Digby newspaper column on coalition and need for falls prevention (2006)
- Digby newspaper column on how to prevent falls (2006)
- FP article and ad for PFT in spring/summer issue of Seniors Advocate (2006)
- FP article in summer/fall edition of the Eastern Shore Observer (2006)
- FP article in summer/fall issue of *Connections*, newsletter of Caregivers NS (2006)
- Maritime Noon phone-in on falls prevention; 55-minute broadcast on CBC Radio One, to 3 provinces (2006)
- Falls prevention PSAs played regularly on Northwood community radio station (2006)
- Use of PSAs at Capital Health Falls Clinic (2006)
- Article with picture in Antigonish Casket describing the initial PFT meeting, the program and the development of the coalition (2006)
- Tips and facts on falls prevention appear weekly as part of a regular column in the Guysborough Journal (2006, 2007)
- Half-page article about the coalition and activities in Canso area, in Guysborough Journal (2006)
- Article in Kentville Advertiser reporting on a falls prevention presentation to a seniors' fitness class (2006)
- Article in Kentville Advertiser reporting on Bone China tea (2006)

- Articles in newsletters of the following organizations: Veterans Affairs, Royal Canadian Legion, Eastern Shore CHB, Metro Housing, Northwood, Capital Health, Community Links, Chebucto Links (2005-2006)
- Article in CB Post to publicize Don't Fiddle with Falls event (2005)
- Article in CB Post on Falls Awareness Day, approx 11 column inches (2005)
- Don't Fall for Christmas article in several newspapers, focusing on falls-prevention Christmas gifts (2005)
- Photo and caption of falls hazards presentation to a grade 3 class at Brookland Elementary School in Sydney (2005)
- Article in south shore newspaper about Report on Seniors Falls in Canada (2005)
- Series of announcements re Seniors' Lifestyle Show aired on CKBW (2005)
- Series of PSAs about preventing falls aired on CKBW (2005)
- Newspaper article about revitalizing the Lunenburg Queens coalition, leading up to the seniors' show (2005)

New communication resources:

- West Hants coalition produced a booklet *Putting Your Best Foot Forward* (2006)
- HRM coalition created speakers bureau and presentation package on falls prevention (2006)