The Policies, Programs, and Partners for Fall Prevention (PPPFP) project, which received funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and launched in October 2012, is made up of a team of researchers from Texas A&M University (TAMU) and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC).

The TAMU Team is based in the School of Rural Public Health of the Health Science Center in College Station, TX and consists of Marcia Ory, Doris Howell, Julie St. John, and Chris Beaudoin. Matthew Smith, the lead evaluator, holds an adjunct position at TAMU and is at the University of Georgia in Athens, GA.

The UNC Team is based at the UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and consists of Tiffany Shubert, Ellen Schneider, Cherie Rosemond, Mary Altpeter, and Stephanie Bomberger.

The PPPFP Team had the opportunity to showcase their progress this past June at the 2013 National Meeting of the Safe States Alliance in Baltimore, MD. In the midst of three days of meetings and presentations with the Falls 1 (another CDC-funded project focused on falls prevention) Team and partners at the Safe States conference, the PPPFP (a.k.a. “Falls 2”) Team had a chance to gather for dinner at The Helmand, a favorite of Principal Investigator Marcia Ory’s.

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HIGHLIGHTS

♦ Targeted Technical Assistance for state Fall Prevention Coalitions to be delivered through mid-2014 (pg. 2)

♦ Join us on the second Wednesday of each month for a Q&A webinar called “Let’s Talk OTAGO” (pg. 3)

♦ The Otago Community is growing! Contact otago@unc.edu to learn how you can get involved (pg. 3)

♦ “How can CHWs/Promotores help older adults stay safe from falls and related injuries?” curriculum to be available to Texas CHWs online in both English and Spanish in late 2013 (pg. 3)

♦ Balance Partner Training sessions scheduled for late August in western NC (pg. 4)

From Our Team

A group of researchers from the PPPFP Team have been accepted as symposium presenters at this year’s annual meeting of the Gerontological Society of America (GSA). GSA’s 66th Annual Scientific Meeting will be held this upcoming November in New Orleans, LA.

Check out the January 2014 issue of our newsletter to receive updates on the presentation!
Aim 1—Policies

The PPPFP Aim 1 Team has been busy throughout the first half of 2013 addressing systems change (policies) surrounding fall prevention throughout the United States.

During late 2012 and early 2013, the Aim 1 Team surveyed the 34 active state Fall Prevention Coalitions. The purpose of administering this survey was to gain insight into the environment of these organizations, as well as to learn about the activities surrounding eight key strategies for attaining systems change that are being pursued across the country.

In April 2013, the PPPFP Aim 1 Team and (Bonita) Lynn Beattie of the National Council on Aging (NCOA) hosted a webinar called “Implementing Change to Advance Falls Prevention: Training, Examples, and Resources,” which was developed to introduce attendees to the NCOA State Policy Toolkit for Advancing Fall Prevention.

As of July 2013, the Aim 1 Team has also started to deliver targeted technical assistance to four state Fall Prevention Coalitions as a part of a deeper case study. This technical assistance will provide these coalitions with individually-tailored suggestions for facilitating systems change around fall prevention within their coalitions, communities, and states. This assistance will be delivered to each of the four states over the course of the next year.

Throughout the remainder of 2013, the Aim 1 Team will continue to analyze the responses and also report on the findings from the state Fall Prevention Coalition surveys that were administered last year. The team is also in the initial planning stages of a follow-up survey which will be distributed to active state Fall Prevention.

Too many people still believe that falls are just a normal part of aging and that there isn’t anything that can be done to prevent them.”

Ellen Schneider on Raising Awareness (from “Implementing Change to Advance Falls Prevention” Webinar on April 11, 2013)

Check the NCOA website for more information on the State Policy Toolkit and other NCOA resources: www.ncoa.org

Aim 2—Programs

Through the second aim of the project, the PPPFP Aim 2 Team is disseminating an evidence-based program called Otago Exercise Program (OEP). OEP, a balance and strength training program developed in New Zealand, is designed to be tailored to each patient’s fall prevention needs and delivered by a physical therapist during a small number of visits over the course of 12 months. In addition to disseminating the program, the Aim 2 Team is also building a community of physical therapists and health care providers who are using OEP in their practices and evaluating the program’s implementation across the United States.

In March 2012, the Aim 2 Team (in conjunction with the Carolina Geriatric Education Center (CGEC) at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill School of Medicine) launched “Otago Exercise Program: Training for Physical Therapists,” an online course designed to train physical therapists on OEP background and delivery.

In April 2012, webinar serving as a follow-up to the Otago online training course, titled “Training Physical Therapists in Evidence-Based Outcome Measures (Otago Exercise Program),” was delivered to 40+ physical therapists from our Otago Community. The purpose of this webinar...
is to provide information on the collection of evidence-based outcome measures from OEP patients and introduce the Otago Outcomes Database. This online database, launched in May 2013, serves as a web-based system for tracking patient progress and outcomes throughout OEP delivery. The Otago Outcomes Database also allows the Aim 2 Team to collect information from the physical therapists on their patients' outcomes and the delivery and implementation of OEP across the country.

Throughout the remainder of 2013 and into 2014, the Aim 2 Team and the CGEC will be hosting a monthly Q&A webinar series, titled “Let’s Talk OTAGO”, to engage the growing Otago Community. Through these webinars, the team will provide an outlet for therapists to share success stories and lessons learned, as well as answer any questions related to OEP or the collection of outcome measures. Data collection from the Otago Outcomes Database will continue as patients are enrolled in OEP by physical therapists in our Otago Community. Additionally, recruitment of physical therapists and health care providers to the Otago Community from all 50 states will continue through national channels such as the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and the NCOA.

Contact the Aim 2 Team with any questions about the OEP, the database, or the Otago Community: otago@unc.edu

The Aim 3 Team has been focusing on engaging and training community partners in the importance of fall prevention advancement. In order to achieve this, the grant team is developing and disseminating curricula to provide community members with the knowledge necessary for providing assistance to peers that are at a risk for experiencing a fall. The Aim 3 Team has two groups—Texas (based in McAllen, TX) and North Carolina (which will work primarily in western NC).

In Texas, the Aim 3 Team developed a training curriculum to be used in the well-established Community Health Worker (CHW)/Promotores system through the Texas Department of State Health Services. This system provides training and certification to individuals so that they are able to provide assistance to the community by passing along knowledge and strategies for reducing risk. The fall prevention curriculum for CHWs will be a new addition for the CHW certification program.

In early June, the Texas Aim 3 Team completed a pilot training session with the curriculum, titled “How can CHWs/Promotores help older adults stay safe from falls and related injuries?”, in McAllen, TX. Based on the feedback from the pilot, the team will continue to refine the developed material in order to disseminate the training curriculum to the CHW certification program.

In the coming months, the CHW training curriculum will be offered during face-to-face training sessions and through an online training program in both English and Spanish to CHWs/Promotores within the Texas system.

Community Health Workers/Promotores (Texas)

Community Health Worker Training and Certification Program Website: http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mch/chw.shtml
In North Carolina, the Aim 3 Team is currently modifying the training curriculum to be used in a community that does not have an established system for engaging community partners in health promotion. The North Carolina Aim 3 Team is working with partners in western NC, where they will implement the Balance Partner Program, which will engage community members in health promotion, similar to the Texas CHW model.

The Western North Carolina Fall Prevention Coalition (based at the Land of Sky Regional Council) and McDowell Senior Center will be hosting sessions in late August in order to train community members as Balance Partners. These trained volunteers will then work in conjunction with the fall risk screening programs that are already in place in the community to provide assistance to individuals at a risk for falling.

“Acting on these [fall risk-reducing] recommendations can be a challenge for many older adults. We recognize this and wanted to develop a training program for volunteers to help older adults enact these changes.”

Tiffany Shubert on the Purpose of Balance Partners (quote included in a press release for the Balance Partner Program and the training session in McDowell County media)

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, August 14th</td>
<td>Let’s Talk OTAGO: Monthly Webinar</td>
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<td>August 28th—29th</td>
<td>Balance Partner Training Sessions in</td>
<td>Balance Partner Training Sessions in McDowell Co., NC</td>
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<td>and Asheville, NC</td>
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<td>Wednesday, September 11th</td>
<td>Let’s Talk OTAGO: Monthly Webinar</td>
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<td>Wednesday, October 9th</td>
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<td>November 20th—24th</td>
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<td>GSA Annual Scientific Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, December 11th</td>
<td>Let’s Talk OTAGO: Monthly Webinar</td>
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UPCOMING GOALS

Aim 1—
- Share lessons learned with the national fall prevention community
- Investigate linkages between state Fall Prevention Coalition environment and activities with the findings in the other two PPPFP aims (Programs and Partners)

Aim 2—
- Teach physical therapists to implement OEP in their practices
- Identify the barriers to OEP implementation in the United States
- Identify the facilitators necessary for the greatest dissemination of OEP
- Continue to build the Otago Community

Aim 3—
- Develop a program to educate and train individuals on the background, importance and strategies for fall prevention in their communities
- Disseminate the training program in both well-established and communities new to the community health worker concept
- Investigate the requirements for program dissemination and the effectiveness in each type of community

Other—
- Develop a website to engage the community in the efforts of the PPPFP Team

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
This research is supported by Cooperative Agreement No. 5U48DP001924-04 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.