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Resolve, Directing the Commissioner of Health and Human Services To Develop Strategies To Keep Senior Citizens Safe from Falls

Sec. 1 Research. Resolved: That the Commissioner of Health and Human Services shall promote and support research to:

1. Improve the identification of older adults who have a high risk of falling;
2. Improve data collection and analysis to identify fall risk and protective factors;
3. Design, implement and evaluate the most effective fall prevention interventions;
4. Improve strategies that are proven to be effective in reducing falls by tailoring those strategies to specific populations of older adults;
5. Maximize the dissemination of proven, effective fall prevention interventions;
6. Improve proven interventions to prevent falls among older adults;
7. Improve the diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of elderly fall victims and those at high risk for falls;
8. Assess the risk of falls occurring in various settings;
9. Identify barriers to the adoption of proven interventions with respect to the prevention of falls among older adults;
10. Develop, implement and evaluate the most effective approaches to reducing falls among high-risk older adults living in communities and long-term care and assisted living facilities; and
11. Evaluate the effectiveness of community programs designed to prevent falls among older adults; and be it further

Sec. 2 Education. Resolved: That the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, either directly or through awarding grants, contracts or cooperative agreements to qualified organizations, institutions or consortia of qualified organizations and institutions, shall provide professional education for physicians and allied health professionals and elder service providers in fall prevention, evaluation and management; and be it further

Sec. 3 Demonstration project. Resolved: That the Commissioner of Health and Human Services shall:

1. Oversee and support demonstration and research projects to be carried out by qualified organizations, institutions or consortia of qualified organizations and institutions in the following areas:
 - A. A statewide demonstration project assessing the utility of targeted fall risk screening and referral programs;
 - B. Programs designed for community-dwelling older adults that use fall intervention approaches, including physical activity, medication assessment and reduction of medication when possible, vision enhancement and home-modification strategies;

C. Programs that are targeted to new fall victims who are at a high risk for 2nd falls and that are designed to maximize independence and quality of life for older adults, particularly those older adults with functional limitations; and

D. Private sector and public-private partnerships to develop technologies to prevent falls among older adults and prevent or reduce injuries when falls occur; and

2. Award grants, contracts or cooperative agreements to qualified organizations, institutions or consortia of qualified organizations and institutions to design, implement and evaluate fall prevention programs using proven intervention strategies in residential and institutional settings; and be it further

Sec. 4 Study effects of falls on health care costs. Resolved: That the Commissioner of Health and Human Services shall conduct a review of the effects of falls on health care costs, the potential for reducing falls and the most effective strategies for reducing health care costs associated with falls. No later than November 2, 2006, the commissioner shall submit a report that includes findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the First Regular Session of the 123rd Legislature.

SUMMARY

This resolve, which is modeled on federal legislation, directs the Commissioner of Health and Human Services to, among other things:

1. Promote and support research designed to develop, implement and evaluate the most effective approaches to reducing and treating falls among high-risk older adults;

2. Educate health care professionals and providers about fall prevention, evaluation and management;

3. Oversee and support demonstration projects designed to prevent falls among older adults and to prevent or reduce injuries associated with such falls; and

4. Evaluate and report to the Legislature on the effect of falls on health care costs, the potential for reducing falls and the most effective strategies for reducing health care costs associated with falls.