



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### Media Contact:

Maureen Lyons  
Corporate Communications  
(630) 792-5171  
[mlyons@jointcommission.org](mailto:mlyons@jointcommission.org)

## The Joint Commission launches educational campaign on preventing falls

*Free downloadable educational materials help educate patients on fall prevention*

(OAKBROOK TERRACE, Illinois – July 24, 2019) – The Joint Commission today debuted its new [Speak Up™ to Prevent Falls campaign](#) – featuring free, downloadable educational materials in English and Spanish to help educate patients and their health care providers on how to avoid unnecessary falls.

Hundreds of thousands of patients fall in hospitals every year and 30 to 50% of these patients sustain an injury.<sup>1,2</sup> And, between 50-75% of elder patients suffer from a nursing home fall each year.<sup>3,4</sup> Of these multiple falls: one out of five cause a serious injury such as broken bones or head injury, with the overall average cost for a fall injury totaling about \$14,000.<sup>5,6</sup>

The campaign's ready-made, easy-to-read [resources](#) include:

- An infographic poster/flyer for patients and their families in three sizes, all available in English and Spanish.
- An animated video, available in English and Spanish, to incorporate in hospital programming.
- A distribution guide with recommendations on how health care organizations can use and distribute the materials to patients and their families, caregivers and advocates.

Speak Up™ to Prevent Falls outlines how to prevent falls and offers four primary areas of direction that patients, their caregivers and advocates can follow to actively prevent the risk of falls:

- **Pay attention to health**
  - Exercise regularly to build strength and balance, get frequent vision checks and communicate with doctors about how to prevent or manage possible medication side effects that could induce dizziness.
- **Take extra precautions**
  - Recommended precautionary steps include: turning on lights when entering a room; using handrails on staircases; wearing shoes with non-slip soles; and replacing rubber tips on canes and walkers when they become worn.
- **Make small changes to home**
  - Recommended modifications include: decluttering regular pathways, including routes to the bathroom; installing timers and motion sensors on lights; using

night lights in bedroom, bathroom and hallway; replacing rugs that can slip with rubber mats; and installing non-slip mats in bathtub or shower and grab bars near toilet, bathtub or shower.

- **Ask for help in the hospital or nursing home**
  - Patients are encouraged to always use their call button to ask for caregiver assistance getting out of bed and for help going to the toilet. In addition, direction is given to lower the height of the patient's bed and side rails.

### About the Speak Up™ program

Launched in 2002, the award-winning Speak Up™ program has been used in more than 70 countries. It encourages patients to be their own advocates and to:

- Speak up.
- Pay attention
- Educate yourself
- Advocates (family members and friends) can help
- Know about your new medicine
- Use a quality health care organization
- Participate in all decisions about your care

The campaign is the third to be introduced in The Joint Commission's [refreshed Speak Up™ program](#) that debuted last year, after national market research including focus group feedback from patients and their families.

For updates on new Speak Up™ campaigns as they become available, [sign up](#) for email alerts or subscribe to the e-newsletter [Joint Commission Online](#). For more information about the Speak Up™ program, visit [The Joint Commission website](#).

<sup>1</sup>Ash K, et al: Case control study of falls in the hospital setting. Journal of Gerontological Nursing, 1998;24:7-15. doi: 10.1111/j.1525-1497.2004.30387.x

<sup>2</sup>Nursing Home Abuse Guide, Paul & Parkins Le; Sterling DA, O'Connor JA, Bonadies J. Geriatric falls: injury severity is high and disproportionate to mechanism. Journal of Trauma-Injury, Infection and Critical Care 2001;50(1):116-9

<sup>3</sup>Alexander BH, Rivara FP, Wolf ME. The cost and frequency of hospitalization for fall-related injuries in older adults. American Journal of Public Health 1992;82(7):1020-

<sup>4</sup>Sterling DA, O'Connor JA, Bonadies J. Geriatric falls: injury severity is high and disproportionate to mechanism.

Journal of Trauma-Injury, Infection and Critical Care 2001;50(1):116-9

<sup>5</sup>Galbraith J, et al: Cost analysis of a falls-prevention program in an orthopaedic setting. Clinical Orthopaedics and Related Research, 2011;469(12):3462-3468. doi:10.1007/s11999-011-1932-9.

<sup>6</sup>Haines T, et al: Cost effectiveness of patient education for the prevention of fall in hospital: economic evaluation from a randomized controlled trial. BMC Medicine. 2013;doi:10.1186/1741-7015-11-135.

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### About The Joint Commission

Founded in 1951, [The Joint Commission](#) seeks to continuously improve health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating health care organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value. The Joint Commission accredits and certifies more than 21,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States. An independent, nonprofit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation's oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care. Learn more about The Joint Commission at [www.jointcommission.org](#).

