



news release

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The Wellmark Foundation provides funding for wellness program for older adults

DES MOINES, IA (January 4, 2010) – The Black Hawk County Health Department will use a two-year, \$112,375 grant from The Wellmark Foundation to implement a wellness program for older adults focusing on fall prevention.

Fall Prevention in Older Adults will implement a coordinated program to prevent falls and related injuries, and to improve overall wellness among adults 60 years and older, says Eileen R. Daley, R.N., M.P.H., Black Hawk County Health Department, division manager. “The innovative approach utilizes balance assessment, fall risk stratification, consumer education and referral, and an evidence-based fall prevention model, A Matter of Balance.”

Black Hawk County Health Department has partnered with Hawkeye Valley Area Agency on Aging, Agape Therapy, and six retirement communities, including Bickford Cottage, Bridges Senior Lifestyle Living, Friendship Village, Mallard Point, Rosewood Estates and The Rose of Waterloo, to incorporate balance assessment, fall risk stratification and recruitment into the Matter of Balance model,” says Daley. A Matter of Balance was developed by Maine Health's Partnership for Healthy Aging and has demonstrated effectiveness in communities similar to Black Hawk County in size and demographics.

Fall Prevention in Older Adults is designed to increase wellness, mobility and independence of participants. Program components include a comprehensive balance assessment, education on personal fall risk and links to appropriate levels of prevention, and a series of A Matter of Balance classes. Participants will learn practical strategies to reduce fall risk and improve overall mobility, goal setting to increase physical activity, and exercises to increase strength, flexibility and balance.

For more information about Fall Prevention in Older Adults, contact Daley at 319-291-2413 or edaley@co.black-hawk.ia.us.

The Wellmark Foundation has provided approximately \$17.43 million to fund 428 health-related grants in Iowa and South Dakota since 1997, including \$447,395 in this *Healthy Communities: Supporting a Culture of Wellness & Prevention* funding cycle. “The Wellmark Foundation works to improve the health of Iowans and South Dakotans,” says Matthew McGarvey, director of The Wellmark Foundation. “We are pleased to support Fall Prevention in Older Adults, an integrated program that focuses on wellness, prevention and independence of older adults, all of which will work to improve their overall quality of life,” says McGarvey.

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