



## September 22nd Should be a Very Big Deal

*By Susan Saldibar*

Yes, falls are still the most common cause of injury in senior living communities. And, yes, you know that. But, as the daughter of a 93-year old mom, I think about falls a lot. And, without a doubt, one of the first things I'd want to know about a senior care community for my mom would be what they are doing to help reduce the potential for falls.

I, for one, would not be satisfied hearing about fall detection and alerts (don't get me wrong, they are important!). But I'd want to know what regular programs are in place to help her keep her feet and legs as strong as possible for as long as possible. I'd also want to know if these programs are run by professional therapists. That stuff is important to me and I'm sure to many other boomers who shift into high gear when it comes to finding an environment for their parents that meets their high expectations.

I enjoy speaking with the people at Aegis Therapies because we can talk about these kinds of programs. I caught up with Kathryn Abrahamson, Corporate Communications Officer for [Aegis Therapies](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner) recently who reminded me that September 22nd is National Falls Prevention Awareness Day. And she was just as quick to say that fall awareness shouldn't rely on one day per year to get attention. I couldn't agree more!

### **Aegis' Balance Management Program is serious about preventing falls.**

I asked Kathryn what they are doing these days to really make inroads into fall prevention that go beyond the usual exercise sessions. As you might guess, they are doing a lot. Their Balance Management Program proactively looks at a resident's underlying impairments and how they may contribute to a potential fall.

They look at some of the less obvious issues that may lead an individual to be more prone to falling. These include nutritional aspects, medications, vision and overall health. More specifically, they will look at the ankle muscles of residents and use electrical stimulation devices to help increase strength. They also look at pain and swelling issues in the joints, working to decrease the pain so that the resident is more comfortable and confident in his or her ability to move. Finally, they look at “sensory awareness” of the feet and legs and work with residents to improve their foot placement and awareness when standing and walking.

And there is no question that this works. Here are some of the benefits of the Balance Management Program.

- Increased patient confidence, resulting in fewer falls
- Improved balance
- Reduced fear of falling
- Identification of patient-specific deficits
- Enhanced personal safety and promotion of safety within their living environment
- Restoration of loss of function

### **Can you say all this about your falls prevention program?**

What I like about this program is that it focuses on improving health and preventing. So they’re looking not just the incident of falling, but the precursors to falling. They work with each resident to build their confidence and physical strength. Those are things that families of residents want to hear about. I know I would.

How are you marking National Falls Prevention Awareness Day? What is your game plan? What programs will you be able to describe in detail when a family with a discerning boomer child, like me, asks?



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