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NEWS RELEASE

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Georgia to Observe 2nd Annual Falls Prevention Awareness Day: September 23, 2011

ATLANTA – On the first day of fall, Friday, September 23rd, Georgia will join 42 other states and the Falls Free[©] Initiative in celebrating National Falls Prevention Awareness Day with a free Fall Prevention Awareness fair. The fair will take place in the lobby and first floor fitness room of 2 Peachtree Street in Atlanta, GA, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

The Office of Injury Prevention of the Georgia Department of Public Health's Maternal and Child Health Program, the Georgia Department of Human Services Division of Aging Services and the Georgia Fall Prevention Coalition are coordinating the event.

In addition to free blood pressure tests, other services available this day include: bone density scans, vision screenings, medication consultations and education on fall prevention strategies in the home, around pets, and entering and exiting a vehicle. Demonstrations of Tango, Wii fitness, and Stepping On – proven methods to improve strength and balance -- will be presented throughout the event. Information on assistive technologies and community resources will also be provided.

"Falls are preventable and we don't want to see any person be limited by such a preventable injury," says Lisa Dawson, Director for the Office of Injury Prevention with the Georgia Department of Public Health, Maternal and Child Health Program.

Falls prevention was among the key recommendations in the federal government's National Prevention Strategy, released earlier this year. Awareness and education are critical elements in the plan to reduce the incidence and severity of falls.

According to the National Prevention, Health Promotion and Public Health Council, the rate of fall-related deaths among older adults aged 65 and older has risen dramatically, from 23.7 deaths per 100,000 in 1993 to the current rate of 45.3 per 100,000.

Falls also pose a significant health burden in the young. According to the CDC, falls are the leading cause of non-fatal injuries for all children ages 0 to 19 years. Every day, approximately 8,000 children are treated in U.S. emergency rooms for fall-related injuries. That adds up to almost 2.8 million children each year.

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About the Georgia Department of Public Health

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) is the lead agency responsible for the health of Georgia's communities and the entire population. In 2011, the General Assembly restored DPH to its own state agency after more than 30 years consolidated under other departments. At the state level, DPH is divided into numerous divisions, sections, programs and offices, and at the local level, DPH functions via 18 health districts and 159 county health departments. Through the changes, the mission has remained constant – to protect the lives of all Georgians. Today, DPH's main functions include: Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Maternal and Child Health, Infectious Disease and Immunization, Environmental Health, Epidemiology, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Emergency Medical Services, Pharmacy, Nursing, Volunteer Health Care, the Office of Health Equity, Vital Records and the State Public Health Laboratory. For more information on DPH, visit www.health.state.ga.us.

About the Falls Free© Initiative

Led by the National Council on Aging, the Falls Free© Initiative includes more than 40 states and 70 national organizations, professional associations, and federal agencies who are working collaboratively to bring education, awareness, and evidence-based solutions to local communities. Falls Free© seeks to provide hundreds of thousands of older Americans with the resources and education needed to reduce their risk of injury.