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| Opinion-Editorial Template  |

The following opinion-editorial template has been written for APTA members to personalize and submit to their local papers. It is designed to speak directly to consumers and raise awareness of the importance of choosing physical therapy to prevent falls.

**Suggested Template Language:**

**Protecting Older Adults From Falling: Why Falls Prevention Should Be a Priority**

October is National Physical Therapy Month, a time to raise community awareness of physical therapy's many benefits. This October, we focus on the importance of falls prevention services.

As a [physical therapist], I’ve seen too many older adults after they fall. Falls are the leading cause of injury for older adults, and millions fall every year. By the time they see a physical therapist, they’re often dealing with more than just physical injuries — there also may be a loss of independence and confidence. The financial toll is a huge burden, with billions of dollars spent annually on falls-related medical care. Despite the clear need, Medicare doesn’t do enough to support falls prevention services. The good news is that falls are preventable.

We can make a real difference in the lives of older adults by expanding Medicare coverage for physical therapy-based falls prevention. This would mean making falls risk assessments a routine part of Medicare’s Annual Wellness Visits. And for older adults at a higher risk of falling, it would mean ensuring that they receive a referral to a physical therapist for further screening and preventive care. If more people had access to these services before a fall occurred, we could most importantly reduce injuries and help seniors maintain their independence. This would lead to a reduction in overall health care costs.

Physical therapy helps address risk factors that contribute to falls, such as poor balance, muscle weakness, and mobility issues. By improving strength, mobility, and balance, physical therapy can significantly reduce the likelihood of falls, thus avoiding costly post-injury care.

Currently, there are programs within Medicare that could be used for falls prevention, such as the “Welcome to Medicare” and Annual Wellness Visits. Unfortunately, these programs are underutilized. To prioritize falls prevention in Medicare, Congress must pass — and the president must sign — the bill currently in the U.S. House of Representatives entitled the SAFE Act (H.R. 7618). With it, we can allow more seniors to access physical therapy services for falls prevention and help avoid the suffering and costs associated with falls.

As a [physical therapist], I know that preventing falls isn’t just about avoiding injuries — it’s about helping older adults live longer, healthier, and more independent lives. By advocating for better Medicare coverage for falls prevention services, we can help protect our seniors and save money in the long run.

You can visit ChoosePT.com/falls to learn about falls awareness, get tips to avoid falls, and learn how physical therapy can help you recover from a fall-related injury. Let’s make falls prevention a priority for our loved ones.

Sincerely,

[Your Name, Your Credentials]

[Your City, State]

[Your Email]
[Your Phone]