

Janet Zander

From: Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging <info@wihealthyaging.org>
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 10:23 AM
To: Janet Zander
Subject: Action Needed

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WIHA Update | Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging

WIHA Update

Extra Edition

June 2025

The Joint Finance Committee--the Legislature's budget-writing committee--is voting on the state budget bill agency-by-agency. We expect them to take up the Department of Health Services (DHS) budget as early as this **Thursday, June 19**.

A **key priority** for Wisconsin's falls prevention network is the [Healthy Aging Grants](#), which support falls prevention work done by the **Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Agency's (WIHA) Falls Free Wisconsin initiative (FFWI)**. FFWI takes a public health approach to falls prevention, addressing the multiple factors that can cause a fall; raising awareness and

Healthy Aging Grants

Reducing falls. Managing chronic conditions. Reducing costs.

Today, one in four Wisconsinites is 60 or older; by 2040, it will be one in three. The demand for services, health care and long-term care is growing. But what if we could reduce that demand by improving the health and well-being of people as they age?

Healthy Aging Grants can do just that!

Research has demonstrated that people — at any age — can learn and carry out effective strategies to reduce their falls risk, better manage chronic health problems, increase physical activity and improve overall physical and mental wellness.

To that end, the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA) and its community partners support legislation to fund the researched and proven strategies that give older people, their families and caregivers the tools to protect their own health and wellness in these key areas:

Preventing Older Adult Falls

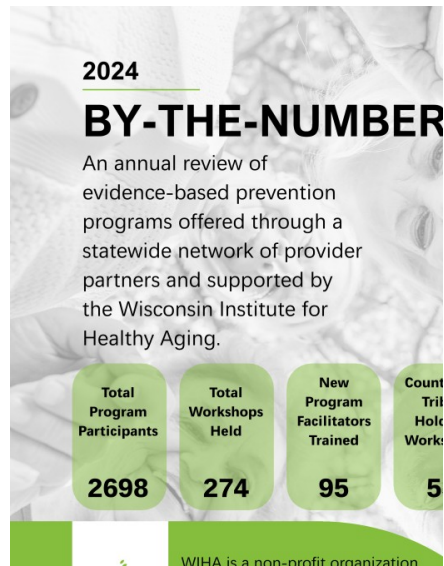
Falls are the number one cause of injuries in older adults and are a key driver of emergency department (ED) visits, hospitalizations and nursing home admissions. One in four older adults has a fall each year and, sadly, Wisconsin has the highest rate of deadly falls in the nation.¹ Yet, there is no state investment in falls prevention.

- \$1 billion is spent annually on falls-related health costs in Wisconsin which includes Medicare, Medicaid and out-of-pocket expenses.²
- Falls have a major impact on emergency medical service (EMS) and health care providers. EMS providers responded to over 130,000 older adult falls across the state making falls the top injury response in 2022 with over 25,000 more than in 2019.³ Nearly one in five EMS responses were for older adult falls.

[View the Healthy Aging Grant](#)

providing information and resources to encourage older people, their families, and their caregivers to eliminate falls hazards; and encouraging state and local efforts to reduce falls risk. Ultimately, FFWI aims to reduce injuries, 911 calls and ambulance rides, emergency department visits and hospitalizations, and deaths.

The Governor's proposed DHS budget included \$450,000 per year in falls prevention grant funding to WIHA. The Joint Finance Committee initially **removed this funding** from the budget, but **we are asking them to add it back in** when they vote on DHS or to set funding aside and commit to passing separate legislation.



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ACTION NEEDED:
Please contact your state senator and state representative by Wednesday, June 18 at 5 p.m. and ask them to put funding for healthy aging grants in the budget.

Please use the sample template below and send to your state representative:

Dear [Representative]:

I am a constituent and want to see investments that support healthy aging in the state budget.

I am reaching out to ask that you support, or let your budget buddy know that you support, providing \$450,000 per year in Department of Health Services funding to the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA) for their Falls Free Wisconsin initiative. Advocates are working with Representative Gundrum to introduce stand-alone legislation to support WIHA's falls prevention initiatives, but funding is needed in the budget.

Wisconsin currently leads the nation in falls-related deaths and WIHA's Falls Free Wisconsin initiative is working to change that using an evidence-based

public health approach. Ultimately, they aim to reduce injuries, 911 calls and ambulance rides, emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths.

Data provided by DHS shows that Wisconsin medics responded to 131,000 falls in 2022 alone—a 24% increase from 2019. In fact, the number of EMS calls related to falls have increased by about 10,000 per year. Investments in falls prevention have the potential to provide a significant return on investment to both local EMS and health care providers by reducing fall-related emergencies.

Please support funding for the healthy aging grants/falls prevention in the 2025-27 DHS budget and let Representative Gundrum know you support his stand-alone legislation.

Sincerely,
NAME
ADDRESS

[Find Your State Representatives](#)

Sincerely,

Jill Renken
Executive Director
Jill.Renken@wihealthyaging.org

Make a gift to WIHA today!

We're aging. All of us. And it's up to each of us to take good care of ourselves and our health as we age. That's where we come in. We're here to help people help themselves to better health. But we can't do it alone! As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, we operate on grants and contributions from generous donors and partners. Your support is vital to us as we administer programs and promote practices that encourage good health. With your donation we can serve older adults in the best possible way to increase the quality of their lives. We thank you so much for being a part of our network!



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