



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 2, 2019

Contact: Cynthia Townsend
cynthia.townsend@globalhealth.com
(Office) 918.878.7335

Oklahoma HMO shares tips to lower risk of falling

More than one in three people over 65 fall each year

OKLAHOMA – According to the National Council on Aging, falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries for people 65 and older. GlobalHealth, an Oklahoma-based health insurance provider, is sharing information to educate Oklahoma seniors on the importance of scheduling an annual fall risk assessment, as well as taking steps to reduce the risk of falling, which can potentially lead to severe injuries.

“Fall prevention is important for seniors to stay safe and healthy because, as you get older, health and physical changes make falls more likely,” said Dr. Wesley Williams, medical director at GlobalHealth. “While falls can result in hip fractures, broken bones and head injuries, the majority of falls are preventable. That is why it is important to speak with your primary care physician (PCP) about tailoring a plan specific to your situation to help you lower the risk of falling.”

GlobalHealth is providing information to help prevent injuries caused by falls.

Causes of falls. As you get older, age-related changes can impair the systems in your body that are involved in maintaining balance and stability. Other factors can also increase your risk of falling, such as walking on a slippery surface, hurrying to answer the phone or moving around in a new home. Some medications may also affect your thinking or make you tired, which may increase your risk of falling. It is important to discuss side effects of medications with your PCP, as well as any falls you have had in the past.

Prevention. Staying active helps you lower your risk of falling. Simple activities and exercises, such as walking or tai chi, can improve your strength, balance, coordination and flexibility. You should also wear sensible shoes and avoid shoes with slick heels or walking in slippery socks. Wear properly fitting, sturdy shoes with non-skid soles and skid-resistant socks when you are walking around without shoes. It is also important to get your eyes checked and ensure your prescription is up to date. Wear glasses as advised by your PCP.

Your home may be filled with falling hazards, from electrical cords to loose rugs. Make your home safer by removing items from walkways, repairing loose floorboards and carpeting, storing clothes, food and other necessities within easy reach and using non-slip mats in your bath or shower. Ask a friend or family member to do a walk-through of your home to ensure it is clear of potential hazards. You should also keep your home brightly lit to help avoid tripping on objects that are hard to see. Always turn on lights before going up or down the stairs, place a lamp within reach of your bed and make clear paths to light switches.

Screenings. Through a fall risk assessment, your PCP can determine if you are at risk of falling. During your screening, your PCP will check for impaired mobility or gait, altered mental state, incontinence, medications associated with falls and a history of falls within the past year. It is recommended that those 65 and older schedule a fall risk assessment annually. This assessment can also be coordinated at the same time as your Medicare Annual Wellness Visit.

About GlobalHealth

GlobalHealth is changing health insurance in Oklahoma. As an industry leader, GlobalHealth is an Oklahoma-based health maintenance organization covering individuals in all 77 Oklahoma counties. Working proactively with its members, GlobalHealth engages a personalized management plan to address their specific needs and ensure the best possible health outcomes. GlobalHealth utilizes cutting-edge, predictive data technology as a foundation to deliver improved healthcare as part of its commitment to making health insurance more affordable. Its membership includes state, education and municipal employees, federal employees, and individuals who are eligible for Medicare. To learn more, visit www.GlobalHealth.com.

###