

MEDIA ADVISORY

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Health Care District of Palm Beach County Kicks Off Falls Prevention Program

West Palm Beach, FL – The Health Care District of Palm Beach County is excited to announce a new falls prevention program at a kickoff event on Friday, September 22nd from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at the South County Civic Center pavilion in Delray Beach. The comprehensive initiative that features free balance classes is designed to address the increasing incidence of falls among county residents. The program's kickoff coincides with Falls Prevention Month in September.



The kickoff event will feature speakers, including U.S. Rep Lois Frankel, Health Care District CEO Darcy Davis, Palm Beach County Vice Mayor Maria Sachs, officials with Palm Beach County Fire Rescue and Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation, as well as provide free night light giveaways and an instructor-led demonstration of Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance®, a research-based balance training program designed for older adults at risk of falling and individuals with balance disorders.

WHAT: Kickoff Event for the Health Care District's Falls Prevention Program

WHEN: Friday, September 22, 2023 from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

WHERE: South County Civic Center (under the pavilion), 16700 Jog Rd, Delray Beach, FL 33446

WHY: Falls were the leading cause of traumatic injuries in Palm Beach County last year, with a staggering 2,570 traumatic falls reported, a 145% increase since 2010.

In response to this concerning trend, the Health Care District secured a \$1 million one-year grant, sponsored by U.S. Rep. Lois Frankel, to spearhead a proactive approach towards falls prevention within the community.

"Falls are a serious health concern in Palm Beach County," stated Darcy Davis, CEO for the Health Care District. "Not only can falls cause serious injury, they also contribute to many in our community losing their independence. With this free program for all ages, the Health Care District and our partners strive to decrease falls in Palm Beach County through proactive collaboration, education and prevention."

The Health Care District's new Falls Prevention Coalition is comprised of elected officials including Congresswoman Frankel and Palm Beach County Vice Mayor Maria Sachs, county partners, community agencies and first responders like Palm Beach County Fire Rescue, Delray Beach Fire Rescue, Palm Beach Gardens Fire Rescue and the West Palm Beach Police Department. The goal of the program is to expand upon the Health Care District's existing falls awareness program for older adults and prioritize evidence-based falls prevention efforts. This involves facilitating comprehensive falls risk assessments, providing guidance and assistance to county residents for making their homes fall-proof, offering core balance classes like Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance®, and creating an enduring falls prevention video series that will continue to serve the community after the conclusion of the grant.



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As part of the ongoing falls prevention efforts, free Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance classes will be taught starting September 18th under the pavilion at the South County Civic Center. These free outdoor classes, in partnership with the Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation Department, will be held weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and are open to the public. The Health Care District is also looking to partner with other locations in Palm Beach County to host classes and is offering free “train the trainer” courses to cultivate additional instructors and expand the class offerings.



In addition to the classes, the Health Care District of Palm Beach County is developing a robust falls prevention app. This app, Prevent Falls PBC, will provide a wealth of tools and resources aimed at preventing falls within the community. It will also offer on-demand access to video recordings of the Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance® classes, ensuring that individuals can participate at their convenience.

“The Health Care District is committed to creating a safer and healthier community by addressing falls prevention head-on, said Belma Andric, MD, MPH, Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer for the Health Care District. “With this falls prevention program, the Health Care District aims to empower residents to take proactive steps towards building their balance and maintaining their overall well-being. We invite the community to join us in taking a stand against falls.”

To learn more about ways you and your family can prevent falls, visit the Health Care District’s website at www.preventfallspsc.org.

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About the Health Care District

The Health Care District of Palm Beach County is a special taxpayer-funded district that has served as a healthcare safety net for 35 years to fill in gaps in access to healthcare services. This unique healthcare system covers the entire county and provides diverse services such as 13 outpatient clinics (Federally Qualified Health Centers) which serve everyone regardless of ability to pay; school health clinicians staffed in nearly 170 public schools; two Trauma Hawk aeromedical helicopters; a rural, public teaching hospital, Lakeside Medical Center; a skilled nursing facility, the Edward J. Healey Rehabilitation and Nursing Center; a ground ambulance program for Health Care District patients needing a higher level of care; a specialty benefits program for eligible, uninsured residents; and quality performance oversight of the county’s lifesaving trauma system.

About Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance®

Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance® (TJQMBB) is a research-based balance training program developed by Dr. Fuzhong Li, a Senior Scientist at the Oregon Research Institute. Designed specifically for older adults at risk of falling and individuals with balance disorders, the program offers a wide range of health benefits, including improved balance, increased lower-extremity strength, enhanced physical performance, and most importantly, the prevention of falls and injurious falls.

About Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation Department

The Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation Department is recognized nationally for excellence in park and recreation management and provides organized recreational programs and services for people of all ages and abilities. Discover healthy, happy living at www.pbcpcparks.com.