



The Implication of Falls

Falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries among adults 65 and older nationwide.¹ One out of five falls cause serious injury such as a broken bone or head injury.¹

Nationwide

In 2012, the CDC reported an estimated 3.2 million non-fatal fall injuries with over half (1.76 million falls) resulting in an Emergency Department (ED) visit.

Falls accounted for 13.5% of all ED visits of persons 65 and over, with the percentage increasing to 20% for the 85 and over population.

The total cost of non-fatal falls is estimated at \$30.3 billion with hospitalizations accounting for 57% (\$17.2 billion) of the total costs.²

In addition to direct medical costs associated with falls and fall-related injuries, many falls result in:

- **Long-term effects such as disability,**
- **Increased isolation from fear of falling with self-imposed limits on community activity,**
- **Lost time from work and household duties,**
- **Reduced quality of life.**

Northern Virginia

In 2014 (most recently available data), approximately 25% of the 230,000 older adults (65 years of age or older) living in Northern Virginia (Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William County) experienced an unintentional fall.³

- 2326 of these individuals required hospitalization to manage a fall-related injury.
- 180 of these individuals died as a result of the fall.
- About 3,000 ED visits to INOVA Fairfax Hospital alone⁴ for fall-related injuries.
- These injuries often require follow-up outpatient medical and rehabilitation visits.

Costs

- The average cost for one fall-related hospitalization in Northern Virginia in 2014 was \$36,900.
- The total cost of fall-related hospitalizations in Northern Virginia in 2014 was nearly \$86,000,000.
- The average length of hospital stay following a fall-related injury was 5.3 days.⁵

¹ WISQARS™ (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System)

² Burns EB, Stevens JA, Lee RL. The direct costs of fatal and non-fatal falls among older adults—United States. *J Safety Res* 2016:58

³ Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey. An annual, random-digit-dialed telephone survey annually in all 50 states

⁴ 2014 Inova Fairfax Medical Campus Quality Report

⁵ Virginia Online Injury Reporting System Hospitalization Data