

# Assessing Fall Risk within the Geriatric Community in Worcester

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## Background

Falls are the leading cause of fatal injury and the most common cause of nonfatal trauma-related hospital admissions among older adults<sup>[1]</sup>

- Every 11 seconds, an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall. Every 19 minutes, an older adult dies from a fall<sup>[1]</sup>
- In 2013, healthcare costs related to elderly falls was estimated to be \$34 billion<sup>[1]</sup>
- Degenerative conditions and factors of physiological decline predispose older adults to weakness and slower protective reflexes. The additive effects of these comorbidities further exacerbate the consequences of a fall<sup>[2]</sup>

## Objectives

- Gain an in-depth understanding of risks, causes and impacts of falls in the Worcester elderly community through immersion in the population.
- Explore the perception of falls by the elderly community.
- Understand the breadth of services available for Worcester's elderly population and their functions.
- Perform Fall Risk Assessments tracking multifactorial risk factors in addition to performance tests.
- Educate Worcester's elderly population through effective fall prevention education.

## Community Outreach

### Function Tests:

- Timed Up and Go (TUG)
- 30 Second Chair Stand Test
- Four Stage Balance Test

### Evaluate Fall Risk Factors:

- Polypharmacy
- Underlying Medical Conditions
- Nutrition
- Isolation
- Dependence

### Fall Risk Education:

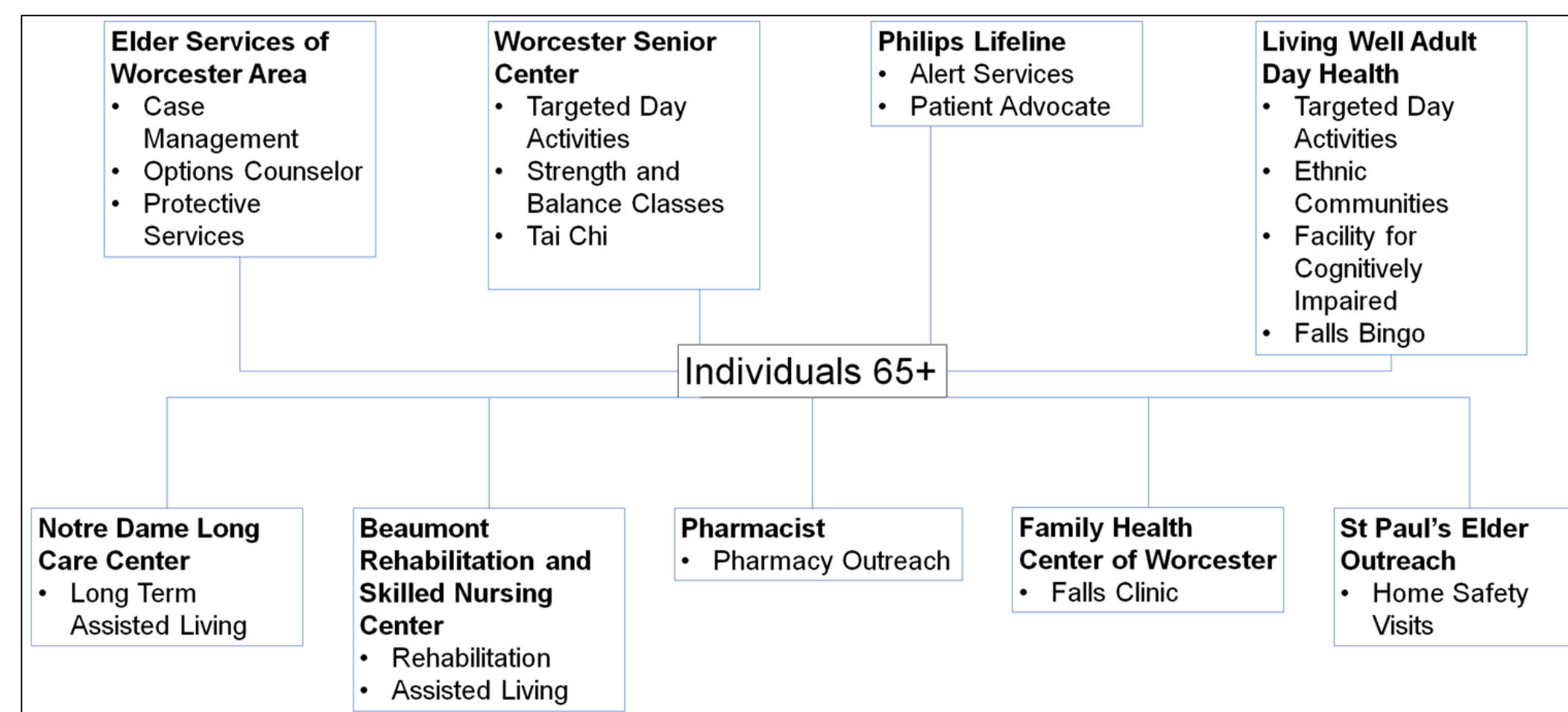
- Provided fall risk assessment results to providers

### Moderated Fall Education Activities



STEADI Fall Risk  
Assessment Tool (3)

## Interprofessional Resources



Resources available to the geriatric community

## Emerging Themes

1. Social Isolation
  - a. Evident at all of the centers that were visited.
  - b. Strong impact on mental health.
2. LGBTQAI+
  - a. Rainbow Lunch and Supper Clubs.
  - b. Some may avoid certain facilities for fear of being discriminated.
3. Polypharmacy
  - a. MCPHS Pharmacy Outreach Program.
  - b. Philip's Automated Medication Dispenser.
4. Caring for the Caregivers
  - a. Dementia Live gives one a glimpse into the physical changes experienced by elderly dementia patients.
  - b. Philip's Lifeline provides a sense of comfort to loved ones.
  - c. Adult Day Center allows families to maintain daily work and home schedule.
5. Facing the Unknown
  - a. Impact of a first fall on their confidence.
  - b. Many elders expressed uncertainty about the future.

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### References:

1. "Falls Prevention Facts." *NCOA*. N.p., 16 Aug. 2017. Web.
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3. "STEADI - Older Adult Fall Prevention." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 24 Mar. 2017. Web.