

# New Enhancements to In-Home Fall Prevention Program

Falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries among older adults—and more than two-thirds of these falls occur in the home. To help reduce this risk, we have enhanced our in-home physical therapy program for preventing falls among older New Yorkers.

“This home-based approach offers a convenient and highly effective way to reduce seniors’ fall risk, making it a great referral option for primary care physicians and nurse practitioners in the community who want to protect their aging patients,” says Sandy Merlino, vice president for Business Development. “Besides helping older New Yorkers live safely in their homes, this program relieves stress on family caregivers who may be concerned about their loved ones falling—which also means fewer calls by the family to the doctor or NP’s office.”

The enhanced fall prevention protocol begins with an in-home assessment by a physical therapist (PT) who evaluates the patient on eight different factors related to fall risk. The PT will then work with the patient to implement a customized treatment plan, tracking their progress throughout. Once the patient has completed the program, the PT will do a reassessment and provide them with an updated exercise plan they can continue doing on their own with support from family members.

“In this program, our physical therapists act as eyes and ears

in the home for doctors and NPs who want to reduce their patients' risk of falling," says Joe Gallagher, director of Operations Support Services. "Depending on the patient's needs, the PT will provide balance and strength training, address environmental issues like stairs, clutter and uneven surfaces, evaluate the patient's footwear, collaborate with a VNS Health nursing supervisor to review medications for potential fall-related side effects and also collaborate with an occupational therapist as needed, and have the patient's vision checked."

Our fall prevention program is typically covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and other long-term care insurance plans for eligible patients who receive a referral, adds Gallagher. "This program is to everyone's benefit," he notes. "The patient is better equipped to live safely at home, their physician and family members rest easier, and insurers can avoid paying for unnecessary emergency department visits or hospital stays."

Falling at home can be dangerous, especially if you or your loved one live alone. Our Falls Prevention program offers ways to help you make your home a safer place.

Learn About Our Falls Prevention Program



