

## **AFFINITY National Falls Prevention and Bone Health Implementation Project**

**Introduction** The purpose of National Falls and Bone Health Project is to implement the ‘National Strategy for the Prevention of Falls and Fractures in Ireland’s Ageing Population’, hereafter known as the National Strategy, and to develop a robust governance framework to monitor progress and ensure accountability and sustainability. The vision of the National Strategy is a “*life free from falls and fractures in our ageing population*” **AFFINITY** (Activating Falls and Fracture Prevention in Ireland Together) aims to prevent harmful falls amongst persons aged 65 years and older, enhance the management of falls and improve health and wellbeing through a focus on bone health.

Core principles of AFFINITY are: ***Integration, Implementation and Innovation.***

Core values of AFFINITY are: ***Mutual Respect, Inclusion, Caring and Sharing.***

**Background** Falls are the dominant cause of injuries among older persons, accounting for approximately one-third of fatal injuries in persons aged 60 and over. Falls can often lead to long-term physical disability (e.g. loss of mobility), severe dependency and reduction in quality of life. The causes of falls in older persons are multi-factorial, many of which are modifiable and preventable. Slips/trips/falls contributes annually to over one third of National Adverse Event Management System (formerly STARS Web) reported incidents from the publicly-funded health and social care system which could have or did lead to unintended and unnecessary harm. In addition, some €520 million is the estimated annual spend in dealing directly with the sequelae of falls and fractures in the absence of implementation of the National Strategy. If we fail to take decisive action now, this latter annual figure is expected to quadruple to €2 billion by 2031, given our ageing demographics.

**Project Overview** The National Falls and Bone Health Strategy has been prioritised for implementation by the HSE and the SCA in 2013. Anne Marie Ryan, HSE Office of the Assistant National Director for Older Persons and Irene O’ Byrne-Maguire, Clinical Risk Adviser with the State Claims Agency, are joint co-ordinators for the project since mid February. Dr Tara Coughlan is the designated Clinical Lead for Falls and Bone Health within the National Clinical Programme for Older Persons (NCPOP). A submission to the National Clinical Effectiveness Committee (NCEC) to seek national recognition for the Guiding Framework/Clinical Guidelines to Prevent Falls and Fractures in Ireland’s Ageing Population has been achieved and will need to be progressed in the coming months. A submission on the Diagnosis and Management of Osteoporosis in Ireland is already being progressed through the NCEC process. A project plan to implement the National Strategy has been agreed, to include a governance framework, an integrated service delivery model approach to implementation and Key Deliverables.

**Governance Arrangements** The governance framework includes a

- National Sponsorship Team
- National Implementation Team
- Regional Implementation Team aligned to the four HSE Administrative Regions

The National Sponsorship Team (NST) comprises members from the HSE, State Claims Agency, Department of Health, Service Delivery Unit and the Clinical Care Programmes. Its remit is to act as a “clearing house” to enable the project meet its goals. This team is accountable to Mr Pat Healy, National Director HSE Social Care Division. The National Implementation Team (NIT) comprises members from various disciplines and settings and with various roles to ensure adequate representation of a “whole system” integrated approach needed. Its remit is to work with the National Joint Co-ordinators to deliver on the National Falls and Bone Health

Implementation Project. The Regional Implementation Teams (RIT) will serve to enable the pilot sites/early adopters identified

to implement an integrated service delivery model for falls and bone health in line with the Specialist Geriatric Services Model and the clinical guidelines to prevent falls and fractures in Ireland's ageing population (currently being progressed through the NCEC process). Each RIT is being co-led by Older Persons and Primary Care Specialist Leads and will need to take account of new governance arrangements as they evolve. The first joint Regional Implementation Team meeting took place on Monday June 10th, 2013.

**Integrated Service Delivery Model** The proposed implementation approach seeks Expressions of Interest (EOI) from potential pilot sites /early adopters (at least one from each of the four HSE Administrative Regions) to implement a Falls and Bone Health integrated care pathway (ICP) for older persons aged 65 years and older in line with the National Strategy and the Specialist Geriatric Services Model. An Online Audit Tool and an Organisational / Unit Falls Readiness Proposal including Checklist have been developed to help potential pilots determine their ability to deliver an ICP within and across various settings. Key members from various settings and disciplines need to commit to working together (MDT) for a 12 month period for a designated population. The MDT team must be empowered to do so by their respective organisational managers/leads.

This Online Audit Tool is based on a national audit tool developed, implemented and evaluated by the Royal College of Physicians, UK in 2005 to measure the progress of falls and bone health services within the UK. This ICP approach feeds into and draws support from the quality and patient safety agenda and HSE clinical governance arrangements operating nationally. It also serves to "test" the integrity of the Specialist Geriatric Services Model, a blueprint for the development of comprehensive, integrated and service-user focussed services for older persons nationally.

**Change Management Supports** To support the National Project AFFINITY a "**Falls**" *collaborative education and training programme* focusing primarily on falls prevention in hospital settings in HSE West Administrative Area was launched early May. This programme can be seen as an enabler for AFFINITY in that it will help commence falls prevention and bone health initiatives or can be used as an enhancer for those teams that already have falls prevention initiatives in place. The "Falls" collaborative programme uses the validated quality improvement methodologies of the Institute of Health Care Improvement (IHI) *Break Through Series* and offered *Free* enrolment. Work is also being progressed on exploring other education and training interventions such as a training needs analysis survey, quality improvement supports and e-learning packages.

A **Web-based Repository** is being developed to promote clear, consistent and timely communications at a system level of relevance to the National Falls Prevention and Bone Health Implementation Project AFFINITY. It is envisaged that this portal will share news updates and key information on

- Governance Arrangements and Action minutes
- The Integrated Service Delivery Model;
- "Best of Breed" policies, procedures, guidelines and tools;
- Web links to sentinel websites and other key resources

**E Learning supports** developed in other jurisdictions, in addition to our own, will be posted to help build competency and capability within the system. Opportunities will be afforded to the system as a whole to share their "best of breed" resources to support the implementation of the National Strategy. Other initiatives of national and international import that are related to falls and bone health will be identified and shared on the web portal as resources allow.

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