

***We're all aging! How to stay safe,  
upright & independent on the journey***

**September 9, 2024**

**Access Committee Meeting**

**Ashley Hillman, Falls Prevention Program Manager**

**Falls Free Dane Coalition**

**Safe Communities**



# Outline

- Why should we care about falls?
- Falls Risk Survey
- Falls Free Dane Coalition
- Effective Falls Prevention Strategies
- Dane County Balance-Enhancing Programs/Classes
- Safe Communities' website
- Questions?

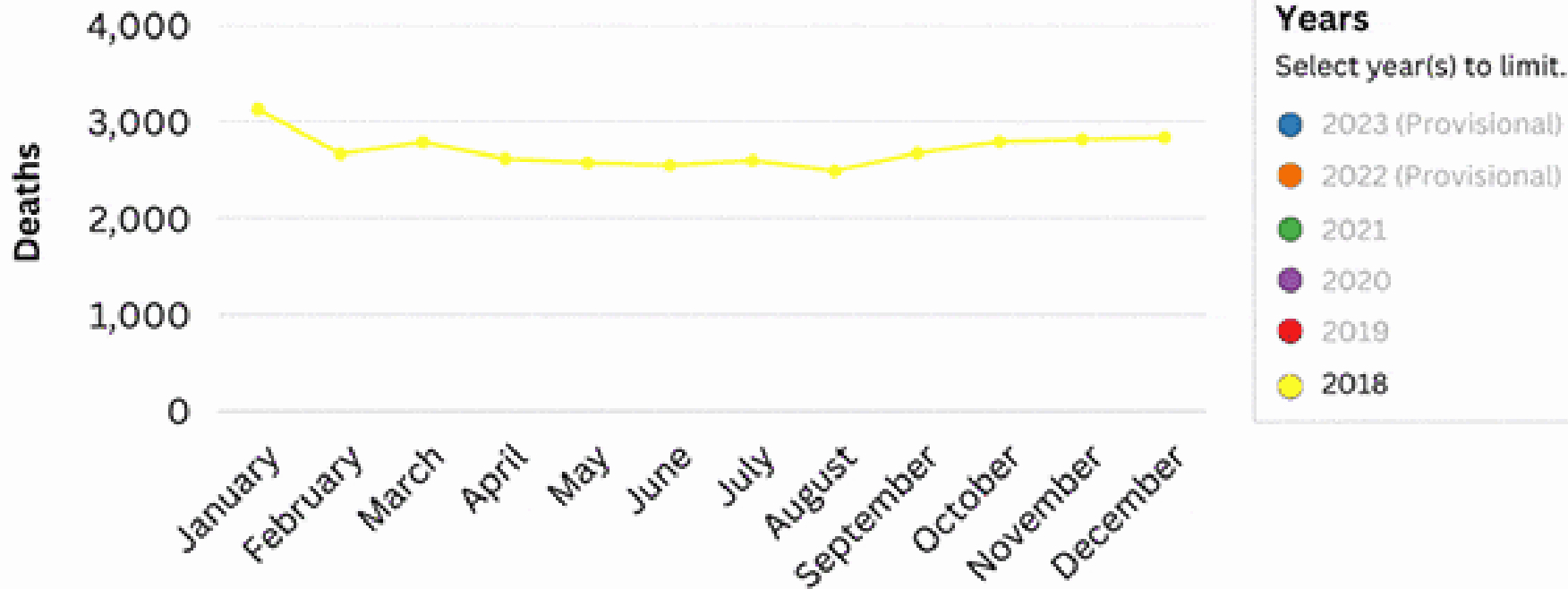


# National Falls Data by Month and Year

Stay up to date with the most recent fatal older adults falls data

Select Injury Type

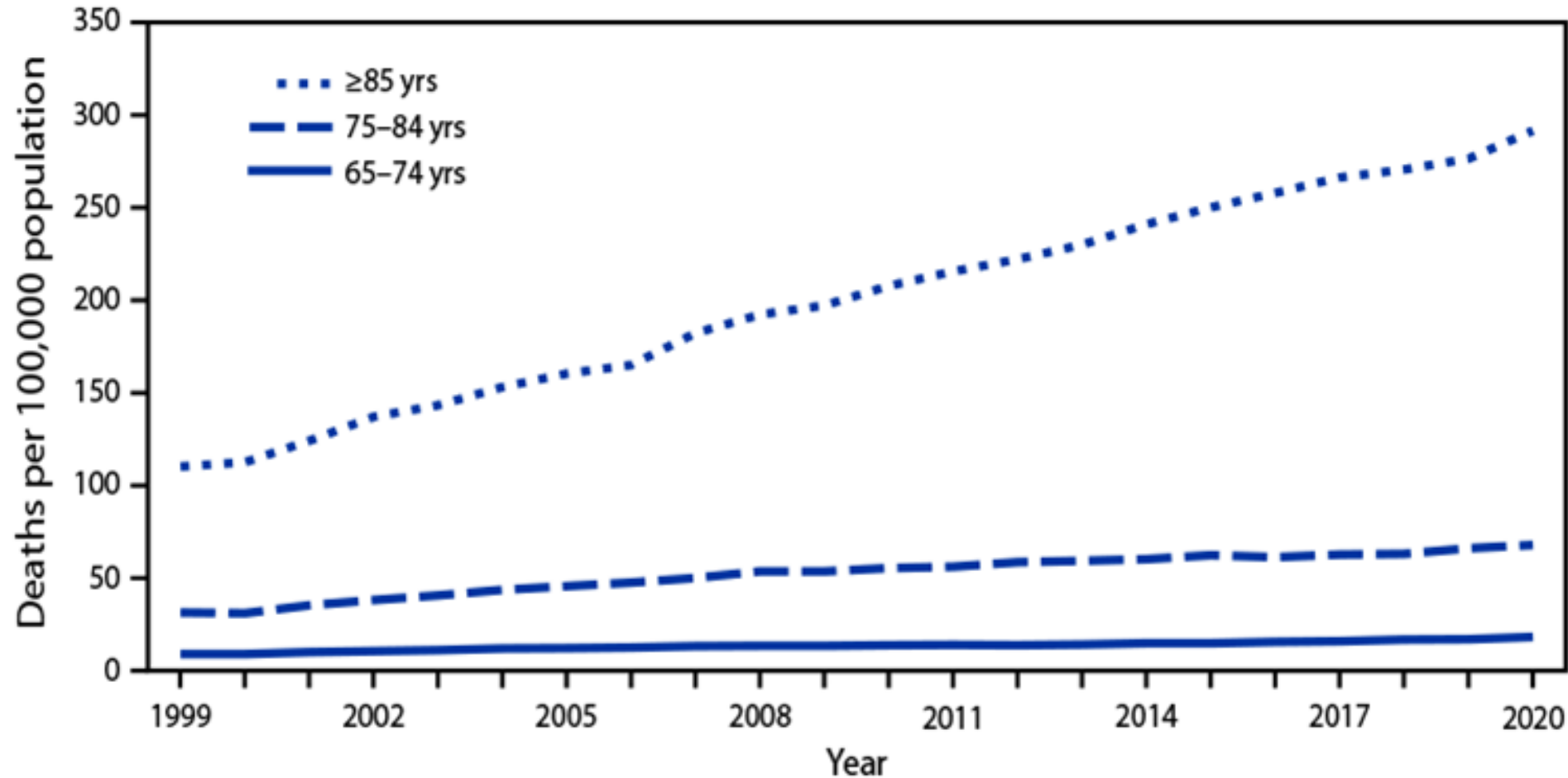
Unintentional Older Adults Falls (Age 65 and Older) ▾



Source: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

# Death Rates from Unintentional Falls Among Persons Aged $\geq 65$ Years, by Age Group — National Vital Statistics System, United States, 1999–2020

Posted on September 23, 2022 by NCHS



Source: National Vital Statistics System, Mortality Data. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/deaths.htm>

# OLDER ADULT FALLS

## Startling Statistics



**1 second**

An older adult falls every second of every day.



**1 in 4**

One in four older adults reported a fall in 2014.



**#1 cause**

Falls are the #1 cause of hip fractures.

**STEADI** Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths & Injuries

[www.cdc.gov/stedi](http://www.cdc.gov/stedi)



**safe communities**

# Falls By the Numbers...

According to the Falls Free WI Center:

- In 2020-21, hospitalizations in WI for older adult falls cost \$427 million (up 11% from 2016-17) (WISH data query)
- An estimated \$1 billion is spent annually on fall-related health costs in WI, which includes both Medicaid and out-of-pocket expenses (CMS)
- In WI, 20% of people entering nursing homes had a fall in the 30 days prior to admission (WISH data query)



# Why should we care about falls?

- Falls are the leading cause of injury death among older adults in Wisconsin (Centers for Disease Control)
- Nationally, 95% of hip fractures are caused by older adult falls (Centers for Disease Control)
- Around 20% of all calls to 911 both locally and statewide are for falls (WI EMS Falls Report, 2022)
- There were over 43,000 ED visits due to falls among adults 65+ in WI in 2021 (WISH Data)
- Ageism has a negative impact on overall health (Levy)
- Falls among older adults are associated with a significant increased risk of motor vehicle crashes (AAA)
- **Falls are NOT a normal part of aging; THEY ARE PREVENTABLE**

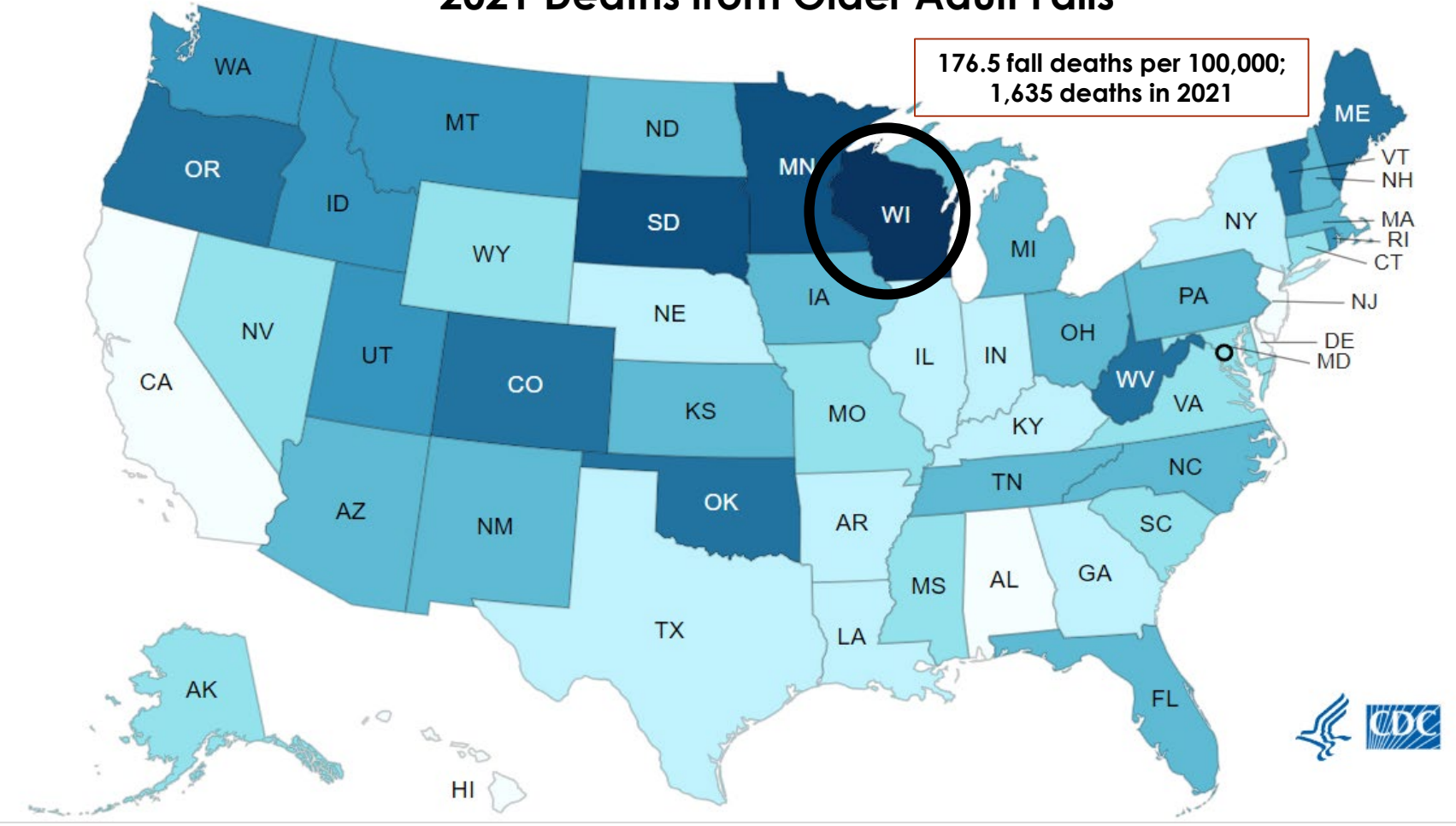




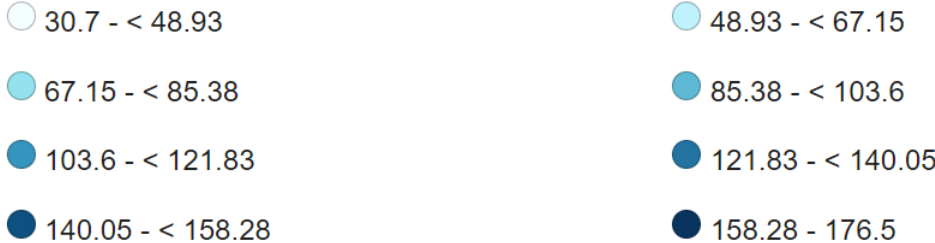




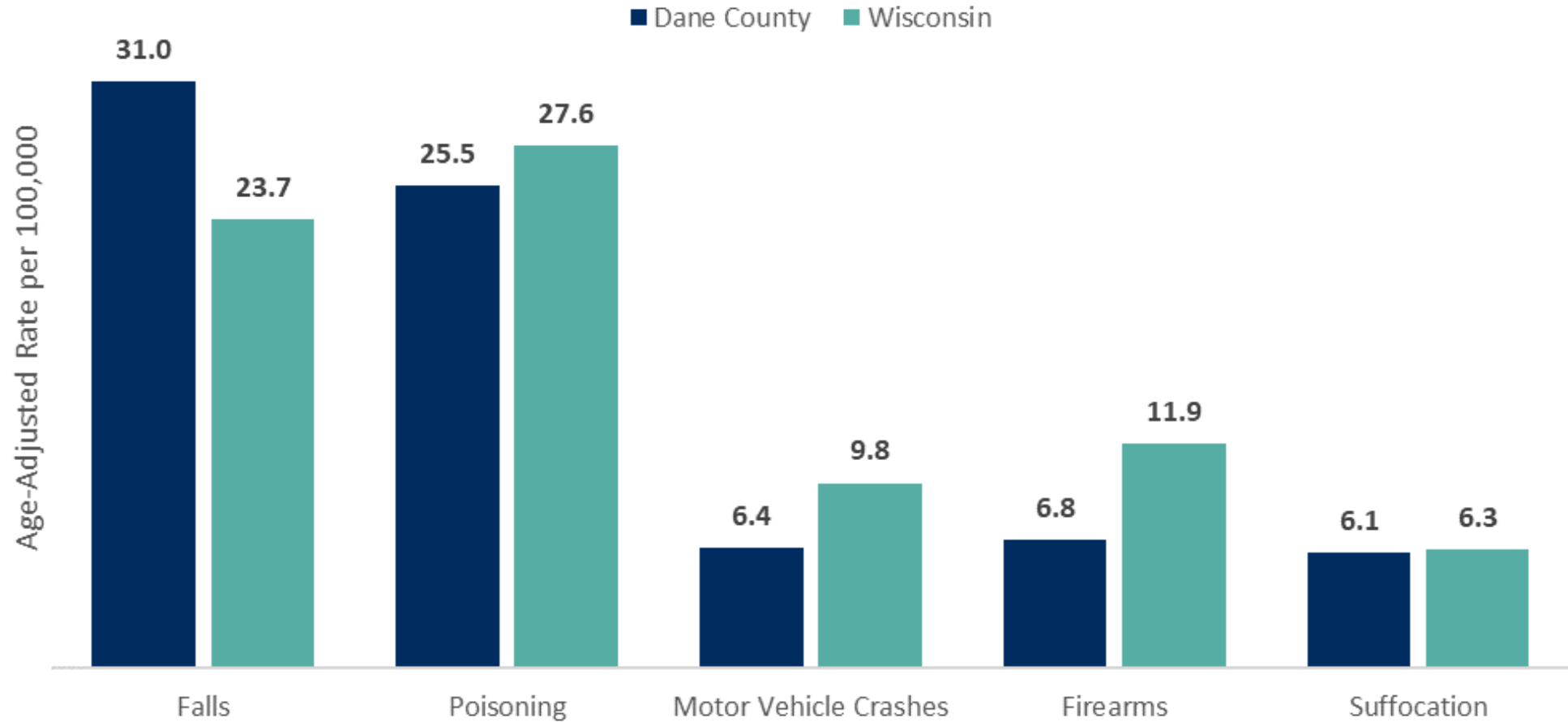
# 2021 Deaths from Older Adult Falls



## Age-Adjusted Death Rates\*

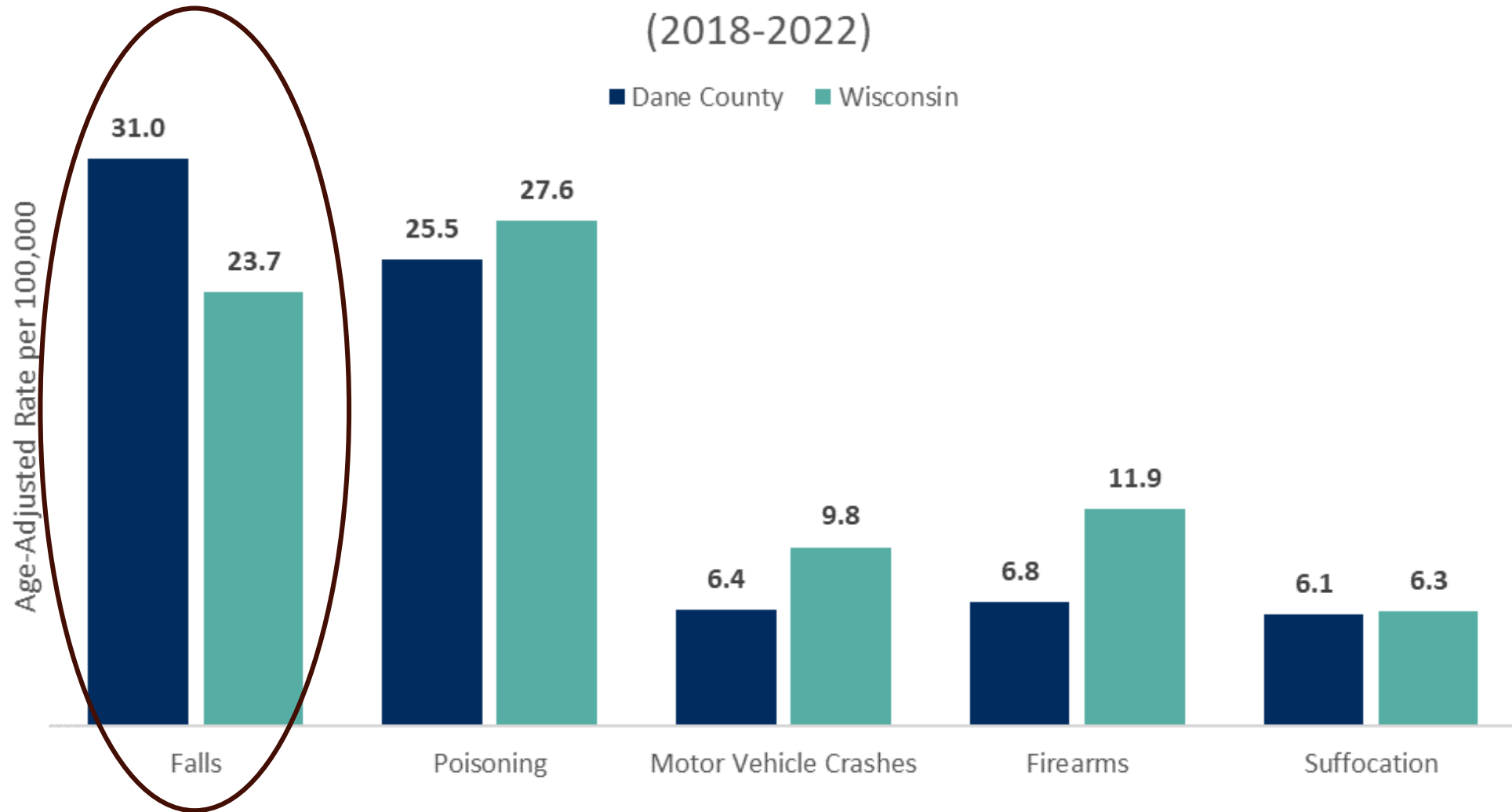


## Injury Death by Underlying Cause, Dane County and WI (2018-2022)



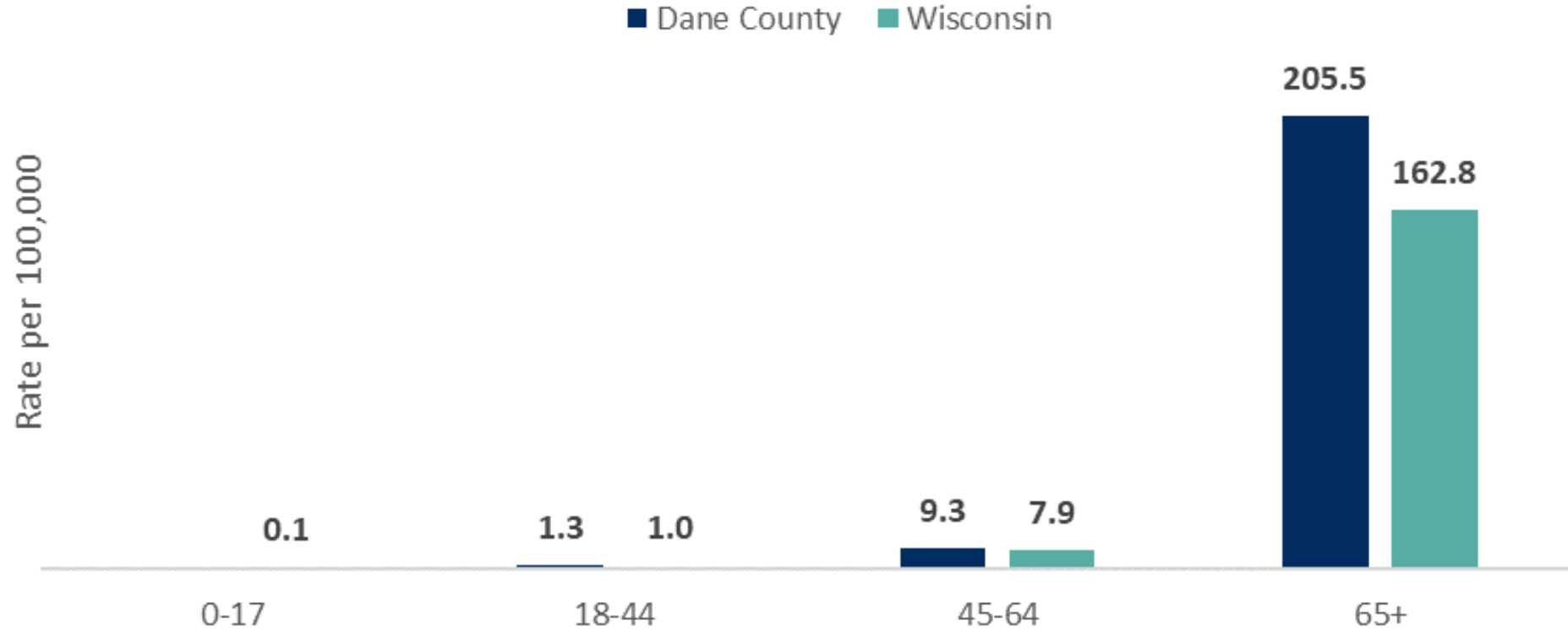
Source: WI Dept. of Health Services (WISH)

## Injury Death by Underlying Cause, Dane County and WI (2018-2022)



Source: WI Dept. of Health Services (WISH)

## Injury Death by Unintentional Fall, Dane County and WI (2018-2022)



Source: WI Dept. of Health Services (WISH)

## Check Your Risk for Falling

Circle "Yes" or "No" for each statement below			Why it matters
Yes (2)	No (0)	I have fallen in the past year.	People who have fallen once are likely to fall again.
Yes (2)	No (0)	I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely.	People who have been advised to use a cane or walker may already be more likely to fall.
Yes (1)	No (0)	Sometimes I feel unsteady when I am walking.	Unsteadiness or needing support while walking are signs of poor balance.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I steady myself by holding onto furniture when walking at home.	This is also a sign of poor balance.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I am worried about falling.	People who are worried about falling are more likely to fall.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I need to push with my hands to stand up from a chair.	This is a sign of weak leg muscles, a major reason for falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.	This is also a sign of weak leg muscles.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I often have to rush to the toilet.	Rushing to the bathroom, especially at night, increases your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I have lost some feeling in my feet.	Numbness in your feet can cause stumbles and lead to falls.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I take medicine that sometimes makes me feel light-headed or more tired than usual.	Side effects from medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I take medicine to help me sleep or improve my mood.	These medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I often feel sad or depressed.	Symptoms of depression, such as not feeling well or feeling slowed down, are linked to falls.
<b>Total</b> _____		Add up the number of points for each "yes" answer. If you scored 4 points or more, you may be at risk for falling. Discuss this brochure with your doctor.	

To check your risk online, visit: [www.bit.ly/3o4RIW8](http://www.bit.ly/3o4RIW8)

This checklist was developed by the Greater Los Angeles VA Geriatric Research Education Clinical Center and affiliates and is a validated fall risk self-assessment tool (Rubenstein et al. J Safety Res; 2011: 42(6)493-499). Adapted with permission of the authors.



# Falls Free Dane Coalition



- Representation from health care systems, senior centers, home health, academia, physical therapy, United Way, EMS, ADRC, public health, etc.
- Systemic and grassroots efforts to reduce rate of falls
  - Work with EMS and health care to improve referrals to resources
  - Increase access to balance-enhancing programs
- Annual falls prevention community events



# Evidence-Based Falls Prevention Strategies Include:

- Home Safety
- Medication Management
- Vision
- Balance & Strength Exercises

**Falls are Preventable.**



Source: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

[\(Patient & Caregiver Resources | STEADI - Older Adult Fall Prevention | CDC Injury Center\)](#)

## Home Safety

- Home safety assessments
- Assistive Devices (cane, walker, walking poles)
- Safety Examples (clutter, rugs, lighting)
- Shoes

## Vision

- Cataracts
- Sunglasses
- Regular Vision Check

**Prevent a Fall!**

## Medication Management

- Adverse Drug Events
- Talk with your pharmacist about all medications & supplements/vitamins
- Medication Reviews
- Keep list with you

## Strength & Balance

- Prevent muscle weakness
- Improve mobility and function
- Physical Therapy
- Other community classes

# Falls Prevention/Balance-Enhancing Classes & Workshops:

- Stepping On
- Tai Chi
- Ballroom Basics for Balance™
- Madison School & Community Recreation (MSCR) 50+ Classes
- Living Falls Free (UW Health)
- Parkour for Seniors
- Yoga
- Water-based classes

<https://safercommunity.net/fall-prevention-classes/>





# Stepping On FAQs:

- **What:** Evidence-based falls prevention workshop proven to reduce the rate of falls by over 30% among completers (50% in WI)
- **How Long:** 7 weeks, 2 hours each week followed by a “booster” session 3 months after workshop concludes
- **Where:** Senior centers, community centers, faith-based organizations, clinics, libraries, etc.
- **Who:** Adults 60+ who have fallen or have a fear of falling and do not rely upon an assistive device INSIDE the home
- **Curriculum:** Focusing on strength/balance, home safety, vision, medication management, safe footwear
- **Cost:** \$0 in 2024; \$10 suggested donation



# Falls Prevention Resources: Safe Communities Website

[www.safercommunity.net](http://www.safercommunity.net)

- Falls Risk Survey
- Falls Free Dane Coalition Members & Web Links
- Falls Free Wisconsin Center
- Local Resources (Medication, Vision, Home Safety, Exercise)
- Available Classes to Promote Balance and/or Prevent Falls
- Keys to Better Balance Resources for practitioners, partners, & community members (infographics, videos, handouts)
- Educational videos and vodcasts
- Events & Relevant Articles



# Ageism's Impact on Healthy Aging

- Ageism is everywhere we look – cards at the grocery store, 100<sup>th</sup> day of school celebrations, Hollywood, advertising, etc.
- Ageism tends to be the most acceptable “ism” in our culture
- According to Dr. Becca Levy’s research, negative perceptions of aging can actually decrease life expectancy (7.5 years)
- Ageism leads to negative health outcomes, including physical, mental, and cognitive issues
- Blue Zones – aging is something to be celebrated!







# Helpful Tips & Resources

- If home safety is an issue, contact the **Safe at Home Program** for a FREE home safety assessment AND follow-up: [info@agebettertoday.org](mailto:info@agebettertoday.org) or call 608-230-4445
- Encourage clients to talk with their PCP and/or pharmacist about medications and request a **comprehensive medication review**
- For more mobile clients, check out the **Safe Communities** website or call Ashley at 608-235-1957 to get plugged into a fun community class that will improve balance!
- Encourage clients to get their vision checked annually – the **WI Council for the Blind & Visually Impaired** is a great, local resource!
- **UW Health's Mobility & Fall Clinic** takes most insurances and can be contacted at (608) 263-7740



# Take a Stand Against Falls.

Don't let a fall  
strip you of your  
independence.

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

# Questions?

**Ashley Hillman, Falls Prevention Program Manager**

**Safe Communities – Falls Free Dane coalition**

**[www.safercommunity.net](http://www.safercommunity.net)**