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Home Care Agency receives grant for exercise program

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Clifton Journal

To reduce the number of falls among seniors and the severity of their injuries, a Passaic-based home care agency has received a grant for the implementation of a unique evidence-based exercise program.

HomeCare Options, which is based in Paterson, is the recipient of a grant from the Passaic County Department of Senior Services, Disability and Veterans Affairs for Good Steps, a program that uses an exercise regimen to increase muscle strength, enhance general fitness and overall well-being, and improve balance.

"The statistics are staggering – one out of three adults age 65 and older falls every year," said Ken Wessel, executive director of HomeCare Options. "Falls are the leading cause of death from injury within this age group, as well as the most common cause of hospital admissions for trauma. As many as one in every three of these falls result in moderate to severe injury, such as lacerations, hip fractures or head trauma. We



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believe this program will make a real difference in reducing both the number of falls and number of injuries that occur as a result of falling."

The home-based, individually tailored strength and balance retraining program was designed by clinicians in New Zealand specifically to prevent falls. The exercises in Good Steps, which are individually described and progressively increase in difficulty, are taught to seniors in home visits made by HomeCare Options nurses, who were previously trained in the program by a physical therapist.

The exercises take about 30 minutes to complete, with participants expected to exercise three times weekly on their own and walk at least twice a week.

According to Alex Barry, director of Services at HomeCare Options, the exercise program was found to be effective in reducing by 35 percent both the number of falls and the number of injuries resulting from falls. The greatest impact was found in high risk

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groups: those over 80 years old and those with a history of falls.

The program incorporates a series of dynamic exercises that focuses on those lower limb muscles that are particularly important for functional movements and walking, and recovering balance.

"Good Steps is an evidence-based program that has been shown to work effectively with seniors," said Barry. "No other falls program has been tested in such a comprehensive way. We're very excited about offering it to those seniors most vulnerable to falling."

Passaic County residents 60 and over are invited to participate. To learn more, call 973-523-1224.



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A large, vibrant advertisement for All American Ford. On the left, a cartoon superhero character in a blue suit with the number "1" is shown. The text "PRE-SEASON SAVINGS" and "ITS GO TIME!" is prominently displayed. A large yellow "\$500 OFF MSRP" is the central focus. Below this, it says "TOWARDS THE PURCHASE OF ANY NEW FORD • LINCOLN • MERCURY • SUBARU VEHICLE". The All American Ford logo and the website "www.ALL AMERICAN FORD.NET" are at the bottom. A note states "MUST BE PRESENT AT TIME OF PURCHASE". Logos for Ford, Lincoln Mercury, Subaru, and Acura are also present.

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