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**Falls Free Coalition Report Includes Replicable
Programs and Practices to Reduce Home Hazards**

WASHINGTON, DC -- The Falls Free™ Coalition Home Safety Workgroup has released its report spotlighting 10 creative programs and practices in home assessment and modification that can reduce home hazards through replication in community based organizations.

“For adults over age 65, falls and injuries from falls are a major threat to health, independence and quality of life,” said James Firman, NCOA president and CEO. “We also know that most older Americans want to live independently, remain in the community, and avoid institutionalization. Effective community based programs can do that.”

The *Creative Practices in Home Safety Assessment and Modification Study* provides insights and ideas for implementing new or strengthening existing home safety assessment and modification programs. These are programs mainly run by home care or senior service agencies that promote the safety and well being of older adults when used in conjunction with a larger fall prevention intervention. Other programs are operated by a trauma center based at a university medical center, another by a hospital system and one was provided as part of a for-profit retirement community.

“The goal of this report is to help safety educators and experts in local communities develop creative programs to address falls and ultimately provide safer home environments for older

adults,” said Meri-K Appy, president of the Home Safety Council. “Our overall objective is to help older adults maintain an active and healthy lifestyle and minimize their exposure to common home safety hazards in order to reduce the need for more costly long-term care services.”

According to the report, some important lessons learned from these programs and practices in terms of replication by others were that:

- Home assessments and subsequent modifications are complex activities that require careful planning, oversight, and follow-up at all stages.
- Many of the programs selected began when a community champion in fall prevention or a staff resource person initiated a home safety and modification effort.
- Strategically established partnerships with organizations such as schools of nursing or Home Builders Association served as a common element across the selected programs.
- Some programs will need specialized people to implement effectively such as occupational therapists and in some communities it may difficult to access them. Still others could be reproduced in specific settings such as a retirement community with existing staff.

The report also identified several creative strategies such as collaborating with first responders and other key partners, making use of trained volunteers, and integrating a fall risk assessment program into a larger safety program aimed at keeping older adults in their homes.

“The sharing of these creative practices will go a long way to helping communities all over the country launch or sustain innovative falls prevention programs on behalf of the nation’s older adults,” said Bonita Beattie, NCOA vice president, Injury Prevention.

Over the past nine months, the Home Safety Workgroup of the Coalition designed and conducted a national search for creative programs and practices. Workgroup members are leading experts in home safety who worked together using the available research to develop

a self-nomination survey that resulted in over 60 completed self-nominations. This effort was led by NCOA's Center for Healthy Aging and funded by the national nonprofit Home Safety Council with support from the Archstone Foundation.

The full report can be found at www.healthyagingprograms.org under Health Topics/Falls Prevention.

The 10 Creative Programs

- Home Injury Prevention Program: Neighborhood Senior Services- Ann Arbor, MI
- Senior HealthLink: Neighborhood Health Agencies- West Chester, PA
- SPICE for Life: Pitt County Council on Aging- Greenville, NC
- Touchmark's Fall Reduction and Awareness Program: Senior Retirement Community Health and Fitness Clubs- Beaverton, OR
- Fall Risk Reduction Project: Saint Elizabeth Home Care Services- Lincoln, NE
- Steady Strides: VNA of Care New England- Warwick, RI
- TriHealth Senior Link Home Safety Check: TriHealth Senior Link (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly/PACE Program)- Cincinnati, OH
- Community Outreach Services Home Safety Unit: Open Hands- Sante Fe, NM
- Farewell to Falls: Stanford University Medical Center Trauma and Emergency Services- Stanford, CA
- LifeAssess: Holy Redeemer Home Care- Philadelphia, PA

The 64 member Falls Free™ Coalition is dedicated to preventing falls in older adults; member organizations include federal agencies, professional associations, national organizations and state coalitions. In 2005 it introduced the Falls Free™ National Action Plan. In 2003, falls resulted in 13,700 deaths, 460,000 hospitalizations and over 1.3 million emergency room visits. In addition to the pain and suffering, fall related injuries medical costs were over \$19 Billion in 2000.

About NCOA

The National Council on Aging's mission is to improve the lives of older Americans. NCOA programs help older people remain healthy and independent, find jobs, increase access to benefits programs, and discover

meaningful ways to continue contributing to society. A charitable organization with a national network of more than 14,000 organizations and leaders, NCOA was founded in 1950 and is based in Washington, DC. For more information about NCOA, please visit www.NCOA.org.

About Home Safety Council

The Home Safety Council (HSC) is the only national nonprofit organization solely dedicated to preventing home related injuries that result in nearly 20,000 deaths and 21 million medical visits on average each year. Through national programs, partnerships and the support of volunteers, HSC educates people of all ages to be safer in and around their homes. The Home Safety Council is a 501(c) (3) charitable organization located in Washington, DC. For more information please visit www.homesafetycouncil.org

About the Archstone Foundation

The Archstone Foundation is a private non-profit grantmaking organization founded in 1985, whose mission is to contribute toward the preparation of society in meeting the needs of an aging population. It has awarded more than \$65 million since its inception. The Archstone Foundation is currently focusing the majority of its resources to address the following four issue areas, with an emphasis on funding California-based initiatives:

- Elder Abuse and Neglect*
- Fall Prevention*
- End-of-Life Issues*
- Responsive grantmaking to address emerging needs within society's aging population.*

The Archstone Foundation strives for lasting change and working in partnership with others. To learn more about the Archstone Foundation and the work of its grantees visit www.archstone.org.

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