

Background

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an estimated 684,000 individuals die from falls worldwide every year (World Health Organization, *Falls* 2021). Additionally, the annual direct medical costs for falls in the U.S. amounts to nearly 50 billion dollars (Kartiko et al., 2020). Falls are a significant concern in healthcare, particularly in the growing ambulatory setting, where patient care accounts for approximately 42.2% of all healthcare spending in the U.S. (Dieleman et al., 2025). Effective screening is crucial for identifying patients at risk and implementing preventive measures. To address this issue, Nursing Education at a Magnet-designated hospital with approximately 1 million outpatient visits per year developed a falls prevention flyer for ambulatory clinics. This flyer aims to educate both patients and staff about the falls prevention program. The primary goal is to enhance understanding and adherence to the program, thereby improving safety and reducing the incidence of falls.

After rounding in several ambulatory clinics at UCI Health and gathering feedback, it was found that many staff members did not understand how to properly utilize the falls screening tool in Epic. Additionally, many staff verbalized that their patients were confused by our fall prevention program.

Objectives

- Educate staff on the UCI Health fall prevention program
- Reinforce best practices to prevent patient injuries
- Inform patients about UCI Health’s fall and injury prevention measures
- Increase falls risk screening rates in ambulatory settings by 5% within 3 months of implementing the fall prevention flyers

Methods

We created two fall prevention flyers: one for staff, detailing “fall risks” and “fall interventions,” and one for patients, explaining our safety measures. To socialize the flyer, as well as our overall fall screening tool, we implemented intentional rounding in clinical areas to educate on how to use the flyers as well as where to document in the electronic medical record (Epic). We presented the flyers in leadership meetings to involve the directors and managers in the clinics.

Fall risk screening rates in the ambulatory setting were tracked monthly via a report in Epic.

Falls Prevention Flyer

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Falls Prevention Flyer: Staff

Be Aware & Take Care

UCI Health wants to Prevent Fall Injuries

SCAN HERE TO REVIEW POLICY

STEP 1: "Be Aware" - If one or more of the following is reported by patient or caregiver, the patient is a fall risk. *Be aware!*

History of fall(s) in last 6 months

Unsteady gait (balance) or hard time getting out of a chair

Uses a walking aid (cane, walker, crutches, or wheelchair)

Confused, drowsy, or immobile

Dizzy or lightheaded

Low blood pressure

Other fall risk factors determined by staff

STEP 2: "Take Care" - Must use at least one or more interventions to prevent a fall. Here are some examples of how we can *Take care* of our patients.

Assist Patient with Mobility

Orient Patient to Room: Ask Patient not to sit on the provider chair with wheels

Orient Patient to Bathroom & Call Lights

Walk beside or one step behind, not ahead of patient

Engage Caregivers in Patient Safety

Lock Wheelchairs & Gurneys

Use appropriate SPH Equipment

If patient is alone, leave door open, close curtain

If a patient is a fall risk, staff MUST BE within arm's reach when ambulating, toileting, and transferring! Tell Patient you are there for their safety!

Falls Prevention Flyer: Patients

Be Aware & Take Care

UCI Health wants to Prevent Fall Injuries

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STEP 1: "Be Aware" - Our friendly UCI Health staff must check if you are at risk of falling. If you have any of these risks, let us know.

History of fall(s) in last 6 months

Fear of falling

Unsteady gait (balance) or hard time getting out of a chair

Use of a walking aid (cane, walker, crutches, or wheelchair)

Confused, drowsy, or immobile

Dizzy or lightheaded

Low blood pressure

Other conditions not listed

STEP 2: "Take Care" - To reduce the risk of falling, use one or more of the safety steps below.

Use Assistive Devices

Press Red Light or Pull Cord for Help (exam room) (bathroom)

DO NOT Sit On The Provider Chair with Wheels

If You Feel Dizzy or Weak, Please Sit Down

Include Caregivers in Safety Plan

Speak Up When You Need Help

Scan to Review Fall Prevention Education

Ask for Help!

Your safety matters to us. If you need to use the restroom or get around, ask for help!

Results

- Monthly fall screening rates were tracked in Epic using a report that pulled data from each ambulatory clinic at UCI Health
- Baseline fall screening rates overall in the ambulatory setting at UCI Health were at 55.28% as of May 2024. After creation and dissemination of the fall prevention flyers, overall fall screening rates in the ambulatory setting at UCI increased to 68.87% by January 2025

Barriers to Implementation

- **Communication with all 120+ clinics:** ensuring clear and consistent communication across all clinics was challenging and required substantial effort to disseminate the fall prevention flyers
- **Buy-in from staff to perform the falls screening:** gaining the commitment and cooperation of staff to consistently perform the falls screening was another major barrier

Conclusion

The implementation of tools to assist staff in maintaining patient safety can significantly enhance compliance. Additionally, conducting rounds with staff and discussing barriers to compliance fosters open dialogue about perceived or actual obstacles. Although all staff expressed a strong commitment to patient safety, a misunderstanding of the screening tool hindered the completion of documentation. The introduction of a simple, illustrative document to aid in interpreting the screening tool had a substantial impact on improving screening rates among our ambulatory staff.

References

Dieleman, J. L., Beauchamp, M., Crosby, S. W., DeJarnatt, D., Johnson, E. K., Lescinsky, H., McHugh, T., Pollock, I., Sahu, M., Swart, V., Taylor, K. V., Thomson, A., Tsakalos, G., Weil, M., Wilner, L. B., Bui, A. L., Duber, H. C., Haakenstad, A., Idrisov, B., & Murray, C. J. (2025). Tracking US health care spending by health condition and county. *JAMA*. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2024.26790>

Kartiko, S., Jeremitsky, E., Cripps, M., Konderwicz, I., Jarosz, E., & Minshall, C. (2020). Fall prevention initiative: A fall screening and intervention pilot study on the ambulatory setting. *Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery*, 88(1), 101–105. <https://doi.org/10.33425/2837-7036>

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Falls Screening Compliance Rates June 2024 – January 2025

| Month  | Compliance Rate (%) | Notes                            |
|--------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Jun-24 | 55.28%              | Flyer created                    |
| Jul-24 | 61.58%              | Presented to clinical leadership |
| Aug-24 | 57.42%              | Intentional rounding in clinics  |
| Sep-24 | 63.60%              |                                  |
| Oct-24 | 58.67%              |                                  |
| Nov-24 | 57.79%              |                                  |
| Dec-24 | 66.51%              |                                  |
| Jan-25 | 68.87%              |                                  |

UCI Health

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PRACTICE TRANSITION  
PROGRAM  
WITH DISTINCTION  
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CREDENTIALING CENTER

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