

**For Immediate Release**

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*South Heartland marks Falls Prevention Awareness Day*

**Hastings, NE (Sept. 20, 2019)** – Falls are not a normal part of aging, but they are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for older Americans.

“Falls are also the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for older adults in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster counties in south central Nebraska,” said health director Michele Bever. Bever said the health department wants people to know what they can do to prevent falls.

“That’s why South Heartland District Health Department (SHDHD) is marking Falls Prevention Awareness Day on September 23 and is using the entire month of September to bring attention to falls prevention,” Bever said.

Liz Chamberlain organizes falls prevention classes and falls risk screenings for older adults in SHDHD’s four counties. She also educates on how to prevent falls.

“There are a few simple things you can do to prevent yourself from falling,” Chamberlain said. “This includes talking to your doctor, continuing to move, and removing clutter.”

According to Chamberlain, getting your eyes checked, reviewing medications with your doctor, doing strength and balance exercises and making your home safer can all help reduce falls.

The South Heartland Falls Prevention program consists of ‘Tai Chi – Moving for Better Balance’ classes and ‘Stepping On’ workshops. The 12-week Tai Chi classes help older adults to keep moving, which improves their balance and reduces the likelihood of falling.

“Research shows that people who complete this program are half as likely to fall and are less fearful about falling,” Chamberlain explained.

The Stepping On workshops are nationally proven to reduce the risk of falls by up to 50%. “In just 7 weeks, workshop participants can be stronger and steadier wherever they go, and they can keep doing the things they want to do,” Chamberlain said.

“Help someone you care about get screened for falls risk or enroll in the next free ‘Tai Chi Moving for Better Balance’ or ‘Stepping On’ falls prevention classes near you,” said Chamberlain.

To find out more about SHDHD’s falls prevention program visit [www.southheartlandhealth.org](http://www.southheartlandhealth.org) or call the health department at 1-877-238-7595.

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