Patient Safety: Falls Prevention

VNAA Best Practice for Hospice and Palliative Care
Hospice patients are particularly at risk for falls due to their overall frail physical condition and declining functional status. falls lead to significant negative consequences for quality of life for hospice patients, adding to the burden of suffering for both patients and caregivers. Prevention of falls and falls injury is an important focus for hospice care especially in patients who are still able to ambulate.
Best Practices

1. A multifactor, standardized falls risk assessment such as the MAHC10 should be done on each patient as part of the initial evaluation.

2. Although most hospice patients are at high risk for falls, the Hospice IDT care plan should include patient specific interventions tailored to the risk factors identified on the falls risk assessment.

3. The risk assessment and care plan should be reevaluated and revised as needed as the patients condition changes.
Critical Interventions/Actions – Falls Prevention

• A falls risk assessment is completed as part of the initial assessment.
• An agency-specific process should be implemented to accurately track and trend the occurrence of falls.
• Staff training should be focused on the importance of falls prevention, risk factors for falls and interventions tailored to minimize those risk factors.
Critical Interventions/Actions – Falls Prevention

Risk factors that should be assessed for possible interventions include: Incontinence, Visual Impairment, Impaired functional mobility, Environmental hazards, Pain, Polypharmacy, and Cognitive Impairment.
Tools

- **Fall Prevention Medication Review Checklist** – helps identify and eliminate side effects and interactions that increase the risk of falls.
- **Falls and Vision Loss Fact Sheet** – age related vision diseases and how they hinder the ability to safely negotiate the environment.
- **GEM** – Environmental Assessment – helps identify safety problems in each room and possible modifications.
- **Orthostatic hypotension Protocol** – helps educate clinicians about orthostatic hypotension. Includes table of commonly used groups of drugs that can cause or exacerbate this problem.
- **MAHC 10** – Fall Risk Assessment Tool.pdf
- **MAHC 10** - Fall Risk Assessment Tool – Directions for use.pdf
- **Tinetti Balance Assessment Tool**
Training Programs

- Falls Risk Assessment VNAA Best Practice.pdf (PowerPoint)
- HHQI Fall Prevention.pdf (Guide)