

Over the holidays I heard many conversations about people being sick with symptoms like nausea, dizziness, weakness, diarrhea, and dehydration. I also heard about people falling as a result of these symptoms - people would not normally be considered to be at risk of falling. It was even reported in the media that Hillary Clinton was among those that experienced a fall.

With the closures of units in Saskatoon Health Region over the holiday season and as the influenza season continues, it is a good time for a reminder that falls prevention needs to be integrated into everything that we do. All patients, clients and residents have the potential to fall so we need to assess their fall risk and have plans in place to reduce their individual risk factors as well as to keep our working environments safe.

Implementation of the Regional Falls Prevention Strategy continues to gain momentum in 2013. More staff are identifying that they are aware of the falls prevention strategies. The number of community partners is growing and the sharing of information and engagement is evident in our data.

Saskatoon Health Region embarked on the "roll out" of the regional falls prevention strategy last fall which was built upon the earlier work done on falls prevention in Long Term Care and Home Care through *Safer Health Care Now!* in 2011. The "rollout" included the definition of a fall, the implementation of universal precautions, and the "three questions" in patient and resident rooms. These resources and others are available on the InfoNet under Seniors' Health and Continuing Care/Falls Prevention.

The Regional Falls Prevention Committee as well as the Long Term Falls Prevention Committee meets monthly to work on its continued efforts to standardize the falls prevention work across the Region. They support research and pilot best practice initiatives that can be spread across the Region. Most recently we have piloted the form previously known as the "fall record" with a goal to finalize it in the next few months. We have also introduced a pilot project in the use of non-skid footwear for patients, residents and clients who may benefit from their use. Work continues on developing a pathway for post falls, and policies including restraint and entrapment. We have used using regional falls data from 2012 to help plan for 2013. The committee welcomes questions from staff in relation to difficult cases and we will problem solve and offer suggestions.

Regional data on falls in long term care will be available to nursing staff February 2013 from RAI-MDS 2.0 including the number of residents that have fallen and the number of residents restrained without relevant diagnosis.

Saskatoon Health Region is committed to reducing falls and injuries from falls. This can only be accomplished by working together in a standardized and collaborative way. Please refer to the InfoNet or call Daphne Kemp, Regional Falls Prevention Coordinator at 655-8664 if you require resources or have any questions about preventing falls.

