



NEWS RELEASE – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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**AAA7 and Shawnee State University Final “Fall-Free Fridays” Episode
Features Information About Making a Plan for Falls Prevention**

According to the National Council on Aging, falls remain a leading cause of injury for people aged 65 and older. Falls threaten older adults’ safety and independence and generate enormous economic and personal costs. The good news is that they are preventable and there are proven steps people can take to reduce their risk.

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) featured “Fall-Free Fridays”, a live, weekly interview with two Shawnee State University (SSU) Occupational Therapy graduate students for thirteen weeks starting in September and ending in December on the AAA7 Facebook page. The students provided community education on falls-related topics and information about falls, risk factors, and helpful prevention tips.

The final episode on December 11th featured the topic “Putting it All Together – Your Plan for Falls Prevention”, presented by SSU Master of Occupational Therapy (OT) graduate students Sydnee Hall and Katie Smith.

Occupational therapy helps people do what they want and need to do. Occupational therapists help people across the entire lifespan, deal with different diagnoses, and work with the person as a whole.

The students discussed how to get up from a fall and establishing a plan for preventing falls.

A simple and safe way to get up after you have fallen includes three actions: Prepare – Rise – Sit. Some tips the students shared include:

- Prepare – do not get up too quickly and do not get up on your own. Call for help.
- Roll on to your side.
- Rise – push your body up and slowly get on your hands and knees. Crawl to a piece of sturdy furniture. Use the piece of furniture to push yourself up with both hands.
- Sit and take a break to make sure you are fine.

Plan for preventing falls:

- Vision and hearing can impact falls. Have these regularly checked by a doctor.
- Going barefoot is not very safe, even in the home. Use a shoe that has good traction and supports you well.

- Taking more than four medications at a time can increase your risk of falls due to side effects and interactions with each other.
- Exercising is important – at least 15 minutes a day to keep your body healthy and strong.
- Slow down and take breaks when needed.
- Use handrails going up and down the stairs.
- When out and about in the community, be aware of cracks and uneven surfaces on the sidewalks and height changes with curbs.
- Falls commonly happen in the kitchen, bathroom and laundry room areas – make sure these areas are clean and clutter-free and have items within your reach. Sit down when necessary while doing chores in these areas to reduce fatigue.
- In the bathroom, use non-slip bathmats and rugs, install grab bars near the toilet and shower, use a bath seat and raised toilet seat, and install automatic lighting.

If you missed the episode, this broadcast and all the broadcasts over the thirteen weeks can be viewed by watching recorded versions that are available on the AAA7's Facebook page or at the AAA7's website at www.aaa7.org. At the Home Page, click on the "Fall-Free Fridays" promotional ad and then find the episode you are interested in.

For more information, call the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277 or info@aaa7.org, or Dr. Christine Raber with the Shawnee State University Occupational Therapy Program at (740) 351-3530 or craber@shawnee.edu.

Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. provides services on a non-discriminatory basis. These services are available to help older adults and those with disabilities live safely and independently in their own homes through services paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, other federal and state resources, as well as private pay. The AAA7's Resource Center is also available to anyone in the community looking for information or assistance with long-term care options. Available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm, the Resource Center is a valuable contact for learning more about options and what programs and services are available for assistance.

Those interested in learning more can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277 (TTY: 711). Here, individuals can speak directly with a specially-trained Resource Specialist who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency also offers an in-home assessment at no cost for those who are interested in learning more. Information is also available on www.aaa7.org, or the Agency can be contacted through e-mail at info@aaa7.org. The Agency also has a Facebook page located at www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7.

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