



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

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## **AAA7 and Shawnee State University “Fall-Free Fridays” Episode Features Information About Individual Fall Risk**

During the month of September, National Falls Prevention Week is observed, a national campaign to educate older adults, their caregivers, and health professionals about the dangers of falling and the steps to prevent falls.

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) recently began featuring “Fall-Free Fridays”, a live, weekly interview with two Shawnee State University (SSU) Occupational Therapy graduate students who provide community education on a falls-related topic and information about falls, risk factors, and helpful prevention tips. The series takes place every Friday at 10:00 am through December 4<sup>th</sup> on the AAA7 Facebook page.

The last episode on September 18<sup>th</sup> featured the topic “What’s My Risk?”, presented by SSU Master of Occupational Therapy students Elizabeth Beatty and Madison Hodge.

The students shared information about what occupational therapists do and what their goal is in helping people live as safely and independently as possible.

The focus of their presentation included identifying fall factors and what can increase the risk of a fall in the home such as stairs, loose rugs, and certain types of floors in the bathroom. They also talked about what they teach individuals about fall risks outside the home including how to use a cane or walker, best practices for avoiding a fall with public transportation, and developing an exercise plan to increase strength and balance.

The students shared that most falls at home occur in the bathroom possibly due to standing up too fast which affects blood pressure, or not having appropriate rugs on the floor or mats in the shower.

Also discussed was the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) initiative STEADI, which stands for “Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths and Injuries”. This includes a self-assessment tool that

consists of a series of questions that can help determine how high of a risk someone may have for falling. During the broadcast, the students went over the questions and have provided a copy of these questions that can be found on the AAA7's website at [www.aaa7.org](http://www.aaa7.org).

The students also shared that the questions can be asked during free Falls Prevention Coaching sessions that the AAA7 and SSU are now offering for anyone who is interested. To learn more about the coaching, please call Hannah Hollingshead at the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277, extension 247 or e-mail [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org). The coaching can take place over the phone or through a virtual format.

If you missed the live broadcast on September 18<sup>th</sup>, a recorded version is available on the AAA7 Facebook page or a dedicated page on the AAA7's website for the Fall-Free Fridays education. To find the educational information, log on to [www.aaa7.org](http://www.aaa7.org), click on the "Fall-Free Fridays" box mid-way on the Home Page, and find the date you are looking for.

The next Fall-Free Fridays episode on Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am will discuss how seeing and hearing can affect fall risk. Two new SSU Master of Occupational Therapy students will present on the topic and be available for questions during the live presentation.

For more information about Fall-Free Fridays, call the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277 or [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org), or Dr. Christine Raber with the Shawnee State University Occupational Therapy Program at (740) 351-3530 or [craber@shawnee.edu](mailto: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](http://www.aaa7.org), or the Agency can be contacted through e-mail at [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org). The Agency also has a Facebook page located at [www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7](http://www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7).

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