



**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 Falls and Hearing/Vision**

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 25<sup>th</sup> featured the topic “What’s Seeing and Hearing Got to Do with Falls?” presented by SSU Master of Occupational Therapy students Kenzie Caudill and Holly Hutchison.

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

The focus of their presentation covered vision and hearing in relation to fall risk and how that is increased with vision and hearing problems. The students gave examples of situations that could cause a fall and stressed the importance of yearly vision and hearing exams.

According to the students’ research, hearing impairments are the third most common chronic condition for those age 65 and older. A mild hearing loss can increase the risk of falling three times by reducing the ability to understand and navigate the environment. Difficulty hearing places a greater strain on the brain and can also impact balance. It is important to be evaluated by an audiologist concerning any hearing issues and utilize hearing aids if prescribed.

In terms of vision, helpful tips to make the area more safe include enhanced lighting, taping down cords or throw rugs to the floor, de-cluttering hallways and walking paths, keeping everything within easy reach, and installing grab bars in the bathroom. Following physician recommendations and wearing prescribed eye glasses that are current and up-to-date is very important as well. Specialty glasses such as transitions lenses that adjust to inside and outside light can create a problem when going from tinted to non-tinted. It is important to give the

lenses time to adjust, in addition to bifocals, which can cause some difficulties with vision when going up and down stairs.

The students shared that more than 75 percent of falls take place inside or in close proximity to the home. There are many falling and tripping hazards that people do not realize and an Occupational Therapy home evaluation can be helpful in identifying risk factors and adapting the home to make it more safe.

The students wrapped up their presentation with a statistic from the CDC that one-third of adults age 65 and older fall each year. Those with low vision are twice as likely to experience multiple falls than those with normal vision. It is important to be aware and adapt to the environment to make it safe for you. Falls are preventable and there are many strategies that can help you reduce your risk.

The students also shared that free Falls Prevention Coaching is available 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 25<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, October 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 am will feature a discussion about falling and falls prevention in relation to what is on your feet. 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](https://www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7).

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**Fall-Free Fridays**  
with the Area Agency on Aging District 7 and  
Shawnee State University Occupational Therapy Program  
**Fridays at 10:00 am**  
**from September 11th**  
**through December 4th**  
AAA7 Facebook Page

**FALLS**  
Prevention  
Awareness

The graphic is a rectangular box with a red border. It contains text and a logo. The text is arranged in a blocky, sans-serif font. The logo features the word 'FALLS' in large, bold, green letters with a red stick figure falling into the 'A'. Below it, the words 'Prevention Awareness' are written in a smaller, red, sans-serif font.