



Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center  
UW Medicine  
Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center

## Seattle Cancer Care Alliance Outpatient Fall Prevention Program

The outpatient fall prevention program at the Seattle Cancer Alliance exists to reduce injury from falls within our ambulatory care clinic. Cancer patients are at a significant risk of falling due to their disease and their therapy. Cancer patients who fall are at a high risk for serious injury and death, especially those with bone involvement of their cancer or low platelets.

### Our Fall Prevention Program

- All patients receive education about preventing falls in the clinic and the home
- All patients are assessed regularly for falls using the SCCA Outpatient Fall Risk Assessment (OFRA)\*
- Nurses implement fall-reduction strategies\*\* for patients with fall risk factors identified
- Departments view alerts in Electronic Medical Record with patients who have fallen in the clinic every time they see the patient for care
- Patients who fall, hit their head and have platelets <50K or INR >2.0 (and do not meet criteria for ER transfer) will receive an outpatient head CT to rule out a bleed
- All patients who fall with a head strike will be monitored for 90 minutes and will be discharged with provider clearance and discharge instructions
- Clinical Nurse Specialist investigates all falls and creates Fall Report

\* OFRA is a Fall Risk Assessment tool created at the SCCA specific for outpatient oncology use

\*\*Insist on proper footwear (closed toe/closed heel with sturdy sole), Encourage caregiver to remain with patient when able, Check on patient frequently, Educate patient and caregiver about fall prevention, Encourage call light use, Consider bedside commode or urinal, Consider transport escort and/or notification of receiving department, Keep beds in lowest position, Secure locks on wheeled equipment, Encourage patients to use assistive devices and bathroom grab bars, Assist patients to exam/procedure tables and infusion beds, Keep patients and family members off rolling exam stools, Physical Therapy, Decrease polypharmacy

### Program Successes

- Infusion Room fall rate decreased significantly
- Increase in fall reporting at the program's inception
- No more repeat fallers
- Reports of near misses (saves)
- Decrease in falls (and falls with injury)
  - Q1/2006=**7** falls
  - Q2/2006=**8** falls
  - Q3/2006=**4** falls
  - Q4/2006=**3** falls
  - Q1/2007=**2** falls
- SCCA OFRA tool appears to be predictive (fallers had higher scores than non-fallers); IRB approved nursing research study currently being conducted to validate tool (started early 2007)

### Barriers

Lack of literature about Evidence-Based interventions to decrease falls in cancer patients  
Provider referral to Physical Therapy not maximized

### Opportunities for overcoming barriers

Research cooperative for studying fall-related topics within the cancer community  
Increase knowledge about benefit of Physical Therapy amongst providers and maximize Physical Therapy referrals