Yearly, a typical nursing home with 100 beds reports 100 to 200 falls. Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries resulting in about 1,800 people living in nursing homes die from falls annually.

This project was developed to combat a rising number of falls experienced at Fairlawn Village Health Center, which provides both skilled and long-term care. With additional focus on protecting the resident’s abilities by managing safety and risks associated with living in a Long Term Care Center.

This initiative will maintain or improve resident’s function and abilities by reducing avoidable falls and hospital readmissions connected to fall trauma. The goal is to increase resident feelings of value and peace by improving care quality and reducing fears of falling.

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Changing to proactively managing falls is only the initial stage in reducing resident risk. Similar to an onion we are only beginning to peel off the layers that are covering a truly safe environment supporting a healthy living for Fairlawn residents. In addition to continual trend analysis and data collection I recommend the development of acuity tracking.

Understanding the needs of the population will help to link high risk and incidents with high acuity, allowing staff to better prepare for preventative measure. By assessing falls and correlation to acuity the facility can better understand and “peel” off the layers to move towards a facility protecting resident mobility.

Developing this project increased awareness of need throughout the facility as we learned that multiple factors affect each resident differently. It was important to always be aware and maintain a resident focused approach when reviewing their safety and developing change. Assessing resident risk required acknowledging specific needs by the entire staff.

By implementing best practices that complemented the organizational vision, we reduced the risk of falls and increase the quality of life for our residents. Throughout this process it was vital to investigate the resident’s needs as a person and not solely focus on the data.

Providing both encouragement of resident independence and mobility while also reducing the factors that increase risks is a complicated balance. However once this is met you truly have provided residents with the most safe and comfortable atmosphere to thrive in.